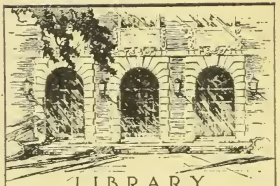

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THE

MUNSTER COTTAGE BOY.

A Tale.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY

REGINA MARIA ROCHE,

AUTHOR OF

THE CHILDREN OF THE ABBEY, TRECOTHICK BOWER, MONASTERY OF ST. COLUMB, &c. &c.

And yet poor Edwin was no vulgar boy. BEATTIE.

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THE

MUNSTER COTTAGE BOY.

CHAPTER I.

"We were as twinn'd lambs, that did frisk i' the sun,
And bleat the one at th' other: what we chang'd,
Was innocence for innocence. We knew not
The doctrine of ill-doing; no, nor dream'd
That any did."

AFTER experiencing many painful vicissitudes, and being long the sport of adverse and capricious fortune, Mr. Beaumont, towards the decline of life, found himself quietly seated, with his wife and granddaughter, in a small retired residence on the southern coast of Ireland. "The waves that poured their drowsy murmurs on the

shore," washed the base of the rocky elevation on which his cottage stood, commanding a view, boundless as human wishes, and grand and varied as imagination could desire: but the events that had depressed his mind, and rendered him in consequence pleased at the idea of retirement, had not altogether produced the same effect upon the feelings of his wife. Of a different temperament and disposition, she yet retained a buoyancy of spirits that did not permit her exactly to relish the idea of looking at the world only through "the loopholes of retreat." But her wish still to mingle a little in its gaieties was not entirely on her own account; she was ambitious of a superior establishment for her granddaughter, and fancied she had only to be seen to have this secured.

The misfortunes of her mother, however, rendered Mr. Beaumont cautious and slow in hearkening to the suggestions of his wife concerning her; he certainly was not without ambition on her account,

but still the recollection of past occurrences impressed upon his mind the necessity of wariness and circumspection.

Through some of the reverses above alluded to, her mother, at an early age, had been compelled to accept the situation of governess in a gentleman's family at some distance from her home; here she had not long been, when chance introduced her to the notice of a gentleman in the neighbourhood who had previously been married. His fortune was reported to be considerable, and his person and manners both so agreeable, as shortly to enable him to make that impression upon the mind of the innocent and susceptible Miss Beaumont he wished: but though, of course, his own master, he had many reasons for not wishing to have his attentions to her publicly known.

His late lady was very highly connected; and so persuaded was he, from the pride and haughtiness of the noble family to which she had been allied, that to unite

himself to a person so inferior in rank would occasion a total relinquishment of all further intercourse between them, that he resolved against the measure, circumstances rendering it not improbable that he might yet require their interest, both for himself and his son. But his seductive allurements failed of success with the object of his admiration, and finding her principles were not to be undermined, either by the blandishments of art or the temptations that wealth enables the libertine to throw in the way of innocence, he so far departed from his original determination as to marry her privately.

For some time she remained satisfied with the reasons he assigned for the concealment of their marriage; but when at length her situation demanded its acknowledgment, and she urged the measure, he protested she must be in a dream, he having taken care to put it out of her power to bring forward any proofs of the ceremony.

Finding, from his base precautions, it was utterly impossible for her to substantiate her right to a name she now bitterly deplored having ever given herself a title to, she returned to her unhappy parents.

The statement she gave could not be discredited: they knew her too well to believe her capable of misrepresenting facts. But while they were convinced of her wrongs, with mingled grief and indignation they saw it was impossible to redress them: but not able to flatter themselves that the confidence of others in her principles would be the same as theirs, to prevent any stigma attaching to her, they removed with her to a place where they were utterly unknown, except by a person who had formerly lived in their service; and in whose humble dwelling taking up, their abode, every necessary preparation was made for the confinement of Mrs. Dundonald, but not without admitting Caty to their confidence, their proud hearts shrinking from the thought of having it

even suspected by her, humble as her rank in society was, that the child about being ushered into life was the child of infamy.

Here, in due course of time, the little Albina was born, and here the earthly sorrows of her mother were terminated: she died shortly after the birth of her infant, with her last breath hoping it might be a source of comfort and consolation to her parents for all the sorrow she had herself occasioned them.

To describe their heart-rending anguish for her loss would be impossible. When all was over—when the earth had shrouded this fair flower, so prematurely cropped, the wretched father wrote to her cruel destroyer to acquaint him with the melancholy event, and implore his doing justice to the memory of his injured daughter by the open acknowledgment of her child.

To this an answer was received, but not one by any means calculated to appease the resentment of the bereaved father. After expressing his regret for the tidings

transmitted, he proceeded to aver that Miss Beaumont had had no claim upon him but what she derived from love, instigated by which, he was ready to take her child under his protection, but certainly not as one he would ever openly acknowledge.

Except he did, Mr. Beaumont firmly decided she should never be committed to his care. Believing at present it would be useless to litigate the point, he resigned her to Caty, and with his wife returned to his residence.

In about five years after, their affairs became sufficiently retrieved to allow of their retiring from business, and they immediately repaired to the place where they had left their grandchild, with an intention of settling there, as a place where they could take her under their own care, and acknowledge her without any injury to the memory of the deceased.

They found poor Caty by no means improved in her circumstances. Shortly

after their first visit, she and her husband Pat had been tempted to open, what is there called a little shabeen-house, namely, a public one; but, unfortunately, poor Pat proving himself their best customer, things got so much in the retrograde order, that he was soon led to believe a transatlantic trip would not be amiss. Accordingly, with his son, he shipped himself off, leaving poor Caty, to her great grief, behind him; but, till he had got himself settled in some way, he conceived it better she should remain where she was.

A little girl under her care, whom they had never heard of before, excited much curiosity in the minds of Mr. and Mrs. Beaumont, particularly in that of the latter. At first they imagined it her own, but she quickly undeceived them. In disclaiming it, however, for hers, she made no mention of those to whom it belonged—a circumstance which, considering her naturally communicative temper, they considered rather strange.

To penetrate into any thing that appeared mysterious was, to Mrs. Beaumont at least, an inexpressible gratification: but in vain she sought to develop this; Caty kept her secret, guarding against even a hint that could lead to a conjecture on the subject.

The little Fidelia was about the age of their grandchild, and be she whose she might, nothing could exceed the idolizing fondness of her nurse for her. Though policy might have dictated a greater shew of kindness to a child whose friends were at hand to notice it, disdaining all art and cunning, or perhaps incapable of practising any in this instance, Caty seemed to take a pride as well as pleasure in evincing, on every occasion, a preferable regard for Fidelia to her other little charge, often, by her manner, intimating her deeming her of much superior consequence, to the no small displeasure and indignation of Mrs. Beaumont, whose pride would not permit her to brook that a little cabin-brat, as in

her angry fits she called her, should be set above her lovely grandchild.

The innocent being, of whose consequence she thus early became jealous, remained too entirely untinctured by those feelings not to delight more in the company of her little foster-sister than in any thing else. Reared together, they could not bear to be sundered; and at length Caty and she became little more than the nominal occupiers of the miserable cabin of the latter, to the no small comfort of Caty herself, who had latterly much oftener kept fast there than the ritual of her church enjoined.

In one way or other she contrived to render herself useful, instinctive shrewdness teaching her that the bread of idleness was seldom given without grudging. Thus almost domesticated at Mr. Beaumont's, she frequently heard the discussions that took place relative to Albina, the previous confidence reposed in her preventing Mr. and Mrs. Beaumont from having any restraint

before her. These discussions still ended in a renewal of the resolution never to resign her to her father, except he acknowledged her in the way they wished, although it might be advantageous to do so. Caty listened and mused, and finally became decided in carrying into effect the idea it suggested.

Five years passed away without any thing new occurring, during which the education of the children progressively advanced, Caty still contriving, by one means or other, to procure for her immediate charge every advantage bestowed on the other; and never perhaps were these beautiful lines of Shakespeare more applicable than to them—

"Both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion,
As if their hands, their sides, voices, and minds
Had been incorporate: so they grew together,
Like to a double cherry, seeming parted,
But yet an union in partition;
Two lovely berries moulded on one stem."

At the expiration of the above period,

Caty, longing to join her husband and son, decided on following to America, and, in place of the child he was refused, leaving Fidelia with Mr. Dundonald as his own, and thus having the satisfaction of thinking she had secured to her a provision such as she was certain she would be unable to obtain her where she was going.

Having fully made up her mind as to her plans, she avowed her intention of proceeding to her husband, and taking Fidelia with her. Mr. Beaumont, understanding that her prospects were very uncertain, pressed her at least to leave the child behind her, promising to take every requisite care of her; but she peremptorily refused, and would have done so, even though she had not believed herself assured of a better provision for her than he could possibly make, owing to the envy with which she saw her regarded by Mrs. Beaumont.

A journey of fifty miles brought her to the magnificent seat of Mr. Dundonald.

As she approached it, her rapture could scarcely be restrained at the idea of having her darling established in such a place.

Mr. Dundonald, one of the most ostentatious of men, left nothing undone indeed that could attract the eye of admiration. Speculation was his rage, and vanity and ambition his incentives to it. Scotland was his country, but he soon quitted it to try his fortune elsewhere. London was the first scene of his exploits; but finding too many competitors in the adventuring line there, he proceeded to Ireland, where he succeeded beyond his expectations.

Years rolled away, and found him literally adding house to house and field to field: there was nothing speculative he did not engage in. He built a town—was a great means of the establishment of mail-coaches—opened a bank—purchased the estates of ruined spendthrifts — erected barracks, and obtained contract after contract from government for the supply of

the military depôts, one of which he took care the town of his own erecting should be, where, in a mansion of the first description, he lived in a style of the greatest elegance and splendour.

Caty speedily obtained a private audience, and revealing the purpose for which she had desired it, presented Fidelia to him as his own, pretending she had been thrown entirely on her by the Beaumonts, and that necessity compelled her to bring her to him.

Having by this time completely gotten the better of any remorseful feelings occasioned by his conduct to Miss Beaumont, Dundonald would gladly have excused himself from accepting the charge she brought him; but finding that impossible, he endeavoured to make the best of the matter, and getting rid of her as quickly as possible, set off the next day with Fidelia for England, to place her at a school in the neighbourhood of London, with a fixed determination of doing nothing more

for her than could enable her to make exertions for herself when she grew up.

CHAPTER II.

"Ah! who can tell how many a soul sublime
Has felt the influence of malignant star!"

At this school were the two daughters of a Mr. Bryerly, an Irish gentleman: they soon took a fancy to the new pupil, from her liveliness and good temper, and in consequence she was frequently invited home with them.

She had been about a year at school, when, as she was about returning there with the Misses Bryerly, after spending the Christmas holidays with them, Mr. Bryerly was informed that the governess, madame Le Gros, had taken herself off to the continent, doubtless to save herself and creditors unnecessary trouble.

This circumstance was of little consequence to the Bryerlys, but of the greatest to Fidelia, as she neither knew the name of her reputed father, nor of his abode, having been purposely kept in ignorance of both, and her Irish method of pronouncing the name of the place where she had been brought up rendered it impossible to make it out.

Every thing that could be devised for discovering those to whom she belonged was done, but in vain; but conceiving it impossible that she would not be inquired after, and a remuneration made for any protection afforded her, both Mr. and Mrs. Bryerly, after some deliberation, decided on letting her remain with them. They both belonged to Ireland, but had quitted it long since, in pursuit of something better than they could obtain there, and in which Mr. Bryerly had succeeded, by shortly getting himself established in an advantageous though rather speculative business.

But young as Fidelia was, she soon had experience of the difference there is between voluntary and enforced attention. The Misses Bryerly were soon taught to consider her a dependent, and all the little gratifications she had hitherto met with quickly ceased. Accustomed, from the earliest period, to the greatest indulgence, this cruel and sudden reverse filled her little heart with grief and dismay. A hope of yet being sought after by those on whose tenderness she might rely, still, however, mitigated these, and enabled her, if there was a gleam of sunshine in her situation, to enjoy it. All regular instruction had ceased from the time of her leaving school, but that which she had previously received, united to good abilities, permitted her to profit sufficiently by the lessons she heard the Misses Bryerly receiving from the different masters that now attended them at home, to prevent her suffering much by its cessation.

But neither her good-humour, her good-

nature, or willingness to oblige, occasioned any alteration in her treatment. As the expectation of being relieved from the burden they thought proper to consider her on them became diminished, their usage became worse, till at length she became almost a kind of slave and scapegoat in the family—the person who was to be ready at the beck of any one, and on whom all the petulances of ill-humour and vexation were ever sure to be vented; and if at times her swelling heart, indignant of such treatment, forced a murmur from her, she was threatened to be put out to some servile business; but still, like some beauteous flowret of the spring, that, spite of nipping frosts and blighting storms, breaks out the glowing ornament of the advancing season, she grew up lovely and amiable in every respect.

She was about seventeen when the Bryerlys went one season on an excursion to the seaside, taking her with them, not to gratify her, but still to have her ser-

vices. In vain did she often sigh to be allowed some little enjoyment of the scenes she was amongst—in vain did her languid cheek at times imply the necessity of this; she was still restricted and confined, chained to work, and immured from company. It would not have been good policy, indeed, in Mrs. Bryerly or her daughters to have exhibited so fair a face; they took care, however, not to allow her to suppose she was capable of inspiring envy.

They had been a short time at the seaside, when they received a card for a ball to be given by the officers quartered in the place. Delighted by the invitation, they immediately commenced preparations for the occasion, and, as usual, Fidelia was called upon to assist in these.

Requiring trimming for some dresses she was decorating for them, she was dispatched to a milliner's for it. She found the shop crowded with belles, all intent in looking at finery, and giving orders for

the approaching occasion with their attendant beaux.

The careless gaiety of all formed a contrast to her feelings, that made her experience still greater melancholy: excluded from all enjoyment, unowned, neglected, solitary, and disregarded, it seemed to her at the moment as if there was "no tear but of her shedding, no sigh but of her breathing." Oh, why, she almost passionately demanded of herself, had she been cherished in the bosom of tenderness but to be cast at random on the world? What could have occasioned the barbarity of her desertion? Had all that loved her died, or had her idea been utterly effaced from their recollection? But she would endeavour to ascertain—an existence joyless as hers was not endurable.

Some time elapsed before she was attended to; but, shrouded in a large bonnet, plain in her attire, and unassuming in her air, she hoped she had not attracted obser-

vation. This was not the case, however; her form, "fresher than the morning rose when the dew wets its leaves," had attracted the eye of one of those military libertines that so often infest places of this kind, and on her quitting the shop he followed.

She was not immediately aware of the circumstance. The house occupied by the Bryerlys was at some little distance from the town, and though commanded to hasten back, Fidelia was involuntarily lingering by the way, anxious to prolong the transient enjoyment, when steps, still following close upon hers, made her at last turn, and she beheld lord Killeny, as the hero that chose to single her out was called.

Directly surmising the truth, and alarmed at being an object of pursuit, from the strictures to which it might expose her from the Bryerlys, but too well inclined, she knew from sad experience, to put the worst construction on every circumstance connected with her, she suddenly turned into a path but little frequented, and hur-

rying on, thus effected her escape. But what was her consternation when, just as she reached the house, she missed the little parcel she had been carrying!

Hastily she retrod her steps for the purpose of seeking it: but in vain—it was not to be found, and she knew not what to do. At length, under a faint hope that she might have dropped it at madame Rugemont's in the confusion she could not help feeling at finding herself amongst so many strangers, she resolved on proceeding thither, though not without extreme reluctance, from her dread of encountering her pursuer again.

The first object she beheld on entering it was him, leaning on the counter, in conversation with madame, in whose house he had taken up his quarters. On seeing him, Fidelia involuntarily drew back; but the emergency she was in required haste, and there being no one else then there to engage the attention of madame, she timidly advanced, and mentioning what had

happened, begged a search might be made after it.

This, however, was as fruitless as the one previously made by herself, and in absolute agony she clasped her hands, unmindful at the moment of being observed. She shrunk from encountering the violence she knew the accident would occasion, yet pride made her unwilling to give utterance to what she feared. At last this yielding in a degree to terror, she begged to speak aside to madame, and candidly confessing that a fear of incurring the imputation of carelessness rendered her very unwilling to let Mrs. Bryerley know what had happened, said she would deem it an obligation for a little while giving her credit for the same quantity of trimming she had lost.

With a rudeness that those to whom but a few minutes before she had been dispensing her fascinating smiles and honeyed flatteries would not perhaps have thought her capable of, madame was on the point of

refusing her, when a significant wink from lord Killeny, who through her had overheard what was passing, prevented her, and with a change of countenance as sudden as if owing to magic, she answered in the affirmative—"*Oh, assurement!*" she said—nothing could possibly give her more extatic pleasure than to oblige mademoiselle; and hastening back to the counter, she quickly produced what she required, entreating to know, as she put up the trimming, whether there was nothing she required for herself—no little ornament, or French lace, or gloves, or perfumery? —"*Mon Dieu!*" she exclaimed, what custom she should have, had she a person so *charmante* to exhibit her things!

"But who the devil, madame, do you think would look like her in them?" demanded lord Killeny, as, still leaning on the counter, he continued staring under the bonnet of the blushing Fidelia.—"Upon my soul, I have not seen any one so handsome this age! But where the

deuce, my lovely girl, have you been hiding yourself since you came here? Curse me, if you must not come to our ball! I'll send you a card, and remember, you must dance with me. Hang me if I dance with any one but you, for after you there won't be a woman in the room worth looking at."

Frightened at the idea of this intended compliment, lest the Bryerlys should conceive she had made an acquaintance with him, Fidelia, while she thanked him for it, assured him positively she never went into public.

With a look of gratitude to madame, she would then have departed but for the dread of being accompanied by him.

While lingering from this idea, two fashionable belles, to whom he was known, came bolting in, and seizing him in a manner that would not permit his escape, allowed Fidelia to effect hers.

A torrent of invectives burst forth on her reaching home for her long stay; and how

doubly rejoiced was she from this circumstance, that lord Killeny had been prevented joining her, lest this should have been imputed to him! But her mind continued greatly agitated: all she was allowed was for mere necessaries, and if madame was not satisfied to share this as she received it, she had no alternative but to dispose of a parting gift of her nurse's, which, both on this account, and from the strict injunction given with it to treasure it with care, she felt most unwilling to resign.

Two days passed without any new occurrence: on the third a billet was privately delivered to her from madame, requiring to see her as soon as possible after receiving it.

She instantly became alarmed: that madame wanted to see her for the purpose of urging her demand, she almost imagined, which, if the case, would compel her to part with her nurse's ring. Suspense, however, was too painful to be endured, and

the absence of the Bryerlys from home for the day on a party of pleasure leaving her free, she hastened to obey her.

She entered with apprehension; but what was her relief, when, instead of the expected demand, madame met her with open arms, and hurrying her into a parlour, assured her her only reason for sending for her was to entreat her acceptance of a beautiful piece of French silk, and some tasteful ornaments which she had purposely selected from a parcel just received from Paris, and which it would be doing her all possible kindness to accept, for she had never seen a being she had taken such a fancy to; but all must love and admire her, and as for the young handsome lord up stairs, he had done nothing since he had seen her but talk and dream of mademoiselle.

"Oh, this is all very foolish, madame," said Fidelia, laughing; and while she thanked her for her intended kindness, positively refused to accept it.

They were arguing the point when lord Killeny entered. He affected surprise at seeing Fidelia, and forcibly taking her hand, congratulated himself on his good fortune for doing so, and at the same time reproached her for the slip she had given him the other day, and her cruelty in rendering herself so invisible, protesting, since he had discovered her residence, he had not ceased wandering about it, in hopes of meeting or seeing her again.

"Ah! I have been telling mademoiselle," cried madame.

"Pshaw!" exclaimed his lordship, checking what further she was about saying; then, still retaining the struggling hand of Fidelia, and trying to draw her further from the door—"Pray have the goodness, madame, to pick me out a dozen of your best York tan. Damn me! if one wouldn't think the last gloves I got from you were dug out of Herculaneum!"

"Ah, comical!" cried madame, but obeying as she spoke.

Fidelia immediately strove to follow, but opposing the attempt, lord Killeny was proceeding to a very explicit declaration of his passion, when the colonel of his regiment, who had been to seek him up stairs, now entered the parlour, *sans ceremonie*, to do the same below, aware of his often loitering away some of his morning hours with madame and her pretty handmaids.

All that could be conceived of manly beauty or elegance was strikingly displayed in the appearance of colonel Grandison. He was on the point of railing at lord Killeny for not attending to a message he had sent him, when suddenly stopping short, after surveying him and his companion for a moment—"Oh! now I see," he said, with a significant look, "to what your forgetfulness of your morning's engagement was owing."

Confused, distressed beyond expression, Fidelia now burst indignantly from the

relaxed hold of lord Killeny, and retreating from the room, was hastily passing through the shop, when madame called to her to know where she was going, protesting she would be quite in despair if she did not dine with her that day, my lord Killeny having sent her in the most delicious dessert, and a hamper of the most exquisite wines, and accommodated her besides with the use of his apartments, commanding from the viranda a view that would enchant her; and in the evening they would go out to hear the band play, or perhaps take a drive in a barouche she had always at her command; and, in short, as odious ill-natured Mrs. Bryerly and her daughters spent the day out, there was nothing to prevent her, and excuse her she would not.

Fidelia coldly replied, by no means pleased with the conduct of madame, it was utterly impossible; and was again on the point of quitting the shop, when lord Killeny, after politely almost wishing the

colonel to the devil for his interruption, rushed forward, and again seizing her hand, prevented her.

With a scream of joy madame declared she was glad he had come out, for she had in vain tried to prevent mademoiselle going.

"Nor will I be prevented now," said Fidelia, struggling to pass. "Unhand me, sir! Madame, I insist on your not allowing me to be detained."

But in vain she might have insisted and entreated, had not colonel Grandison been present. He followed from the parlour, and having satisfied himself, by the countenance and agitation of Fidelia, that she did not feign what she did not feel, he hastened to her rescue, and succeeding in liberating her from her persecutor, continued to guard the door till he had seen her out of sight.

Lord Killeny was not a little provoked: various motives, however, withheld him from giving way entirely to his rage.

"A pretty fellow you are!" at length said the colonel: "again at your old tricks! A fine hopeful youth *mon père* and *mon mère* recommended to my care!"

"Upon my soul, I wish you would bestow it entirely on your own affairs!" half sulkily rejoined lord Killeny. "A good joke! recommend me to the care of a person scarcely older than myself!—But they are wise ones."

"Well, but to the point: for Heaven's sake, Killeny, how can you think of annoying a modest female? If the looks are a criterion, the poor girl that has just escaped from you is really so."

"That's the very reason," said his lordship, as they left the shop, "that I pursue her. I would not give a curse for the fruit that drops into my mouth the moment I gape for it."

"What a strange perverseness," returned the other, "to seek the destruction of that which you acknowledge the chief allurement! but I give you fair warning—if

the girl proves what she seems, I'll positively put her on her guard against you and that cajoling devil Rugemont."

"You will! Then hang me if I don't retaliate, by straining every nerve to outwit and outmanœuvre you in any thing of the kind!"

"Very well; I give you leave—that is," laughing, "if you can."

"Oh, you are sly, I know—But no matter—*nous verrons*."

In the mean while, Fidelia was hurrying back, determined never to expose herself to any thing of the kind again, if in her power to avoid it, by entering madame's house. That what had passed was merely accidental she could scarcely bring herself to think, and she trembled to think of being in the power of a woman capable of the black design she was now suspecting madame of. But then she had her ring to relieve her; yet with invincible reluctance she thought of parting with it, not from the consideration of its beauty,

but as a memento of her having once been loved and valued by some one.

Matters, as she apprehended, did not exactly end in this way. She now became tormented with billets from madame, importuning to see her again, and could never stir out that she was not beset by lord Killeny, whose declarations soon became very explicit: in short, no art was untried, either by him or his unprincipled assistant, to effect her destruction, encouraged to persevere by the knowledge of her dependent situation. Gladly would she have solicited the interference of those she resided with, but from a dread of being considered to blame herself in the affair, and thus exposed to additional unhappiness.

At length she received a most angry letter from madame, saying that as she had every reason to believe, from her absenting herself entirely from her house, that it was her intention to forget the debt she had contracted with her, she begged

leave to remind her of it, with an assurance that if she did not immediately call to settle it, she would no longer hesitate acquainting Mrs. Bryerly with the affair.

There was, then, no longer any alternative: her nurse's parting gift must be resigned, and thus perhaps the only thing that might yet have led to the discovery of those she belonged to, for that it was on that account she had received such a charge relative to it, she had not a doubt. Of its intrinsic worth she knew nothing, withheld as she had been by various considerations from shewing it where that could have been ascertained: from its beauty, however, she certainly would have been led herself to estimate it rather highly, but for the improbability of any thing of great consequence coming into the hands of Caty. She could not avoid, however, thinking that it certainly must be of sufficient value to free her from her obligation to madame; and availing herself of the first opportunity for going to her, was introduced into the par-

lour, where, swelling with either affected or real anger, she received her.

A torrent of bitter reproaches for some time prevented her speaking; at length madame becoming exhausted by her own volubility, enabled her to state the purpose for which she had come, and producing the ring, she presented it to her, with a hope that it would be equivalent to the demand she had on her, adding, she had no other earthly mode of discharging it.

Madame eagerly snatched it: for a minute or two something prevented her speaking; then, with well counterfeited indifference laying it down, but so as to have it within her own immediate grasp, she said, since that was the case, to oblige her she would take the bauble, and when she returned to London for the winter, shew it to her own jeweller, who was a most conscientious person, and let her know the value he set on it, which, however, she could not help thinking, would be very trifling—inadequate, indeed, she was per-

suaded, to the full discharge of her debt, but a few shillings she should not be particular about.—"But, *mon Dieu!*" she added, "what a little fool you are to distress yourself in this manner, when wealth and independence are at your command!"

She then proceeded to plead, in the warmest, the most energetic style, for lord Killeny, who only waited, she assured her, permission to throw himself and fortune at her feet; and would any one in their senses, situated as she was, reject the offer he made her?

Fidelia listened to her with calm, or rather stern composure. When she had concluded, she would have rebuked her, but that she had reason to believe a rebuke would have been very little attended to; she therefore contented herself with merely saying, that perhaps the time would yet come in which she might be rejoiced she had not hearkened to her arguments, as, in different situations, people often viewed things in different lights. Then add-

ing, that she now hoped all further correspondence would be at an end between them, she was departing, when involuntarily casting her eyes again upon the ring, she burst into tears. Had she then parted with all that she had possessed to remind her of ever having had a friend—the treasure that she had so carefully guarded since it had come into her possession by night and by day?—"Oh, once more let me look at it!" she cried, seeing madame draw it towards her with a look of fear.

"My God!" cried the crafty Frenchwoman, "*sans doute*. You are not going to want to have it back again?"

"Oh no!" replied Fidelia, bending over it with fast-falling tears; "but you know not how I value it—'twas the only memorial I had of happier days."

The parlour-door opened; she started in alarm, but was relieved in some degree by seeing only the stranger (as colonel Grandison was still to her, his name being unknown) and not lord Killeny, as she had

apprehended. He had been up stairs to seek him, but not finding either him or his servant there, had come to inquire of madame concerning him, as he wanted to speak to him on regimental business.

Madame assured him, on her honour, she could not tell where he was, forgetting, perhaps from the sudden flutter with which she appeared to be seized at the moment, that his lordship was then actually in an inner room, where she had herself placed him, for the purpose of letting him hear all that passed between her and Fidelia, conceiving that perhaps else he might doubt her advocating his cause in the manner he had a right to expect from the liberality of his presents to her.

Confused by being surprised by a stranger in such agony, Fidelia hastily applied her handkerchief to her streaming eyes, and precipitately departed.

"What, in the name of Heaven," exclaimed he, turning to madame, as soon as she was gone, for till then he had ap-

peared transfixed to the spot, "have you been doing to that poor girl?"

"Doing!" madame repeated. "*Pauvre* little *diable!* Nothing; she was crying because she was asked for a debt she had not the power of paying, and which I was at last forced to accept a trumpery bauble for."

"What, that ring?" he cried, glancing at the ring, which by this time madame had put on, and was viewing with no small degree of delight; then looking more attentively at it, he started, and hastily desired to be allowed to examine it.

"Oh, it isn't worth looking at," madame replied, in manifest confusion, and trying to conceal it.

"Pardon me," he exclaimed; and taking her hand, without ceremony he drew it off. Scarcely had he done so, ere, changing colour, an exclamation of surprise burst from him.

"Oh, *diable!* you know something about it then?" cried madame, greatly

alarmed; "and she has taken me in about it?"

"Taken you in!" was repeated with contemptuous emphasis; he then demanded whether she had mentioned to her how she came by it?

Madame would have had no scruple in vilifying her, but that, in the present instance, an adherence to truth would, she conceived, serve herself; she accordingly proceeded, in the most solemn manner, to assure him that Fidelia had declared it was her own, repeating all she had said of its being the parting gift of a friend, as a corroboration of what she herself averred; trusting that, by establishing her right to dispose of it, her own to its quiet possession would not be disputed.

"Good God!" exclaimed the person to whom she addressed herself, after attentively listening to her; "how unexpected! how surprising! At length, then, a clue is found by which an opportunity may be obtained of discharging the obligations of

gratitude. She is—she must be——" Then recollecting himself, with a very different aspect to his usual one, he turned to madame, and informed her they must have a little private conversation, carefully examining the respective doors as he spoke, to see they were closed.

What this conversation was, as we were not stationed, like lord Killeny, where we could exactly hear it, we shall not pretend to relate. Suffice it, in the course of that evening, Fidelia, to her extreme surprise, received a billet from madame, informing her that, by chance, just after she left her that day, the parcel she supposed she had lost was found in the shop, and that, consequently, as this settled the little pecuniary transaction between them, she begged leave to restore her ring to her.

With a joy resembling that which the sight of an old friend occasions, Fidelia welcomed the restoration of this valued treasure. She bedewed it with tears of ecstacy; and after gazing at it over and

over again, as if doubtful of its being again in her possession, once more deposited it within her bosom, with a resolution never to part with it again.

CHAPTER III.

"Remembrance wakes, with all her busy train,
Swells at my breast, and turns the past to pain."

A DAY or two after this, as she was returning from a lady's where she had been with a message from Mrs. Bryerly, she was accosted by the stranger to whose interference she was unconsciously so much indebted, but whom, from being in coloured clothes, she did not immediately recollect —a circumstance that added to the confusion she was thrown into at the moment.

Having apologized for addressing her, he proceeded to state, that he trusted his motive for the liberty would prove a suffi-

cient excuse for it. He then, after a slight hesitation, went on to say, that, inspired by the interest which youth and innocence never fail to excite, he begged leave to caution her against madame Rugemont, who was by no means a proper person for her to have any particular communication with, and to earnestly advise her, if lord Killeny persevered in any further attentions to her, not to permit them, without the privity and concurrence of her friends.

Surprise and emotion at so lively an interest about her in a total stranger, prevented Fidelia from having the power of immediately replying. When she had regained it, she gratefully thanked him for his kindness, assuring him it confirmed her previous resolution relative to the persons he alluded to.

"You are not offended, then," he said, earnestly regarding her, "at the liberty I have taken?"

"Offended!" emphatically repeated Fidelia—"Oh no! who could be offended at

receiving a proof of kindness, the greatest, perhaps, that can be shewn—that of putting me on my guard against dangerous characters, especially a person situated——"

She stopped, embarrassed at the idea of having been so nearly betrayed into a confidential communication with a total stranger; but the tears that filled her eyes almost explained what she had been about saying.

Finding she would not go on—"How much does the sweetness and condescension with which you have listened to me," said he, after the pause of a minute, "enhance the pleasure I feel in thinking I may perhaps have served you!" Then perceiving that he rather prevented her proceeding, he respectfully took her hand, and gently touching it with his lips, took leave of her, not without a fervent hope that he should have the happiness of seeing her again.

For some hours after, Fidelia could think

of nothing else. How surprising, how flattering, so warm an interest for her in the bosom of a total stranger! How soothing, how consolatory should be the proof it afforded, that, isolated as she was, there were some kind and noble characters in the world, who would not let that circumstance prevent their thinking her of some little consequence in society! While she felt grateful for the caution she had received, she also felt delighted to think it was not needful—delighted too at the idea of having impressed this conviction on the mind of the stranger, since she could not doubt its being calculated to raise her in his estimation.

But the pleasure she derived from the idea of the interest she had inspired him with was of short duration. The very next day she found an anonymous letter in her chamber, in which she was entreated, as she valued her future peace and welfare, to be on her guard against him, he being, she was most solemnly assured,

one of the most insidious, deceptive, and unprincipled of mankind—one of those dangerous characters, who, from plausible manners, and the semblance of every virtue, was enabled to steal imperceptibly upon the confidence, and thus easily effect the destruction of any destined victim. Hidden rocks, she was reminded, were ever considered the most dangerous, so the concealed libertine was more to be dreaded than the bold and open profligate. The caution relative to lord Killeny, the writer proceeded to observe, might not be amiss, but the motive for it deserved indignation and abhorrence, being no other than to impose such a belief of generosity and integrity upon her, as should obtain her confidence, where every advantage was intended to be taken of the circumstance. How he came to obtain the knowledge his letter must intimate his having, was a circumstance, he said, that must remain a secret: suffice it for her to know, that he was an unconnected character, who, from

having no immediate concerns of his own to attend to, found pleasure in making observations, and obtaining information of what was passing around him, more especially as doing so, now and then, as in the present case, put it in his power to serve the unwary and unprotected. Should his present caution be attended to, it would afford him heartfelt delight, as there was nothing he more abhorred than the idea of innocence becoming the prey of premeditated villany.

Unutterable was the astonishment of Fidelia at the perusal of this, both from the mysterious knowledge it intimated of what had recently occurred, and the caution it conveyed against a person whose previous notice of another's designs had impressed her with such sentiments of gratitude and admiration. She knew not what to think. She would have felt inclined to imagine it a production of lord Killeny's, but for the manner in which his lordship himself was alluded to in it—

too little versed in artful manœuvres to see this in that light, that so suspicion might be diverted from himself, and readier credence given to the assertions against her new friend.

That he merited these she could not bring herself implicitly to believe. Traits of the mind must surely, she thought, be impressed, in some degree, upon the countenance, and his was indicative of nothing but truth, generosity, and feeling. Yet, lest she should err—lest this fair seeming might be but a covering to a dissimulative nature, she determined, after many struggles, to act with the caution which was recommended, and thus at least avoid internal blame. But deeply was she hurt at being compelled to relinquish the high opinion she had formed of him: it was flattering to her pride to think of having interested such a character as she had at first conceived him to be. It grieved her to think of there being such baseness, such deception in the world. How should she

again know where to confide, if here there was hollowness of heart? How did she wish she had a friend to commune with on the subject! But she possessed none—there was no beacon for her to look up to for avoidance from danger—she was left solely to her own innate sense of what was right, and all she could do was humbly to implore divine protection in the path—alas! she feared perilous path—she had to tread in life.

Having fully decided on avoiding him if they chanced to meet again, she fervently hoped they might not, so painful to her thoughts was the idea of acting in such a manner towards him: but her hopes were fruitless—she encountered him a few days after, approaching her on horseback. She would instantly have retreated, if she could; but not having the power, she directly turned aside her head, and kept obstinately looking in a contrary direction till he had passed. But her heart smote her at the moment. There was such an

expression of glowing pleasure and delight in the look with which he was approaching her, that she could not help thinking herself guilty of ingratitude for acting in this manner. What must—what would he be likely to think of it? If conscious of meriting her good opinion, would he not be led to infer from it, that, after all, she was offended with his caution relative to lord Killeny?—an inference that could not fail of making him despise her.

Tears of vexation burst from her; and if she had offended him, she felt convinced, if he could have looked into her heart at the moment, he would have thought himself revenged. She returned home, discontented with herself and all about her; but at length her good sense got the better of her emotion, and the reflection that, situated as she was, her own protector in a great degree, she could not be too cautious in every instance, reconciled her, in a degree, to herself.

But neither on this, nor any other re-

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cent occurrence, had she leisure long to reflect. The Bryerlys quitted Hastings abruptly, owing to some tidings received from town, where they had not long been again, ere they announced their intention of going over to Ireland; and in ecstacy at this unexpected determination, every thing else was forgotten.

With that dear country every thing of happiness or pleasure was still associated; to it her thoughts still reverted—to it her untravelled heart still fondly turned—to it she had determined yet, some way or other, to make her way. Oh! to breathe again the fresh air of its bright green fields, would be renovating to her soul. In returning to it, she felt as if she was returning to a home. She could recollect nothing but kindness and good-nature in it—the laugh of good-humour, and the caress of good-nature. She would not—she could not be there, without retracing her way to Caty's, and discovering the Beaumonts—without exerting every faculty to

unite herself again with the spot of her nativity.

She was indefatigable in assisting in making preparations for their departure. No task now seemed laborious, and her wild delight had at length the effect of diverting the Bryerlys. A thousand old tales and traditions revived in her recollection; she was a fund of amusement to the Miss Bryerlys, from the relations she now gave them, and to which an added interest was imparted, by her declaring she could point out the very identical places where such and such things she mentioned to them had happened: the old castle where the haughty chieftain lived, whose pride made him set fire to it, on receiving a visit from a neighbouring one, to conceal his not having proper accommodations in it for him; the fairy-haunted mountain, and the blessed well of St. Luke, in which ablutions for sin were still performed.

At length they departed. On the pas-

sage, Fidelia took an opportunity of inquiring of a gentleman who attached himself to their party, and seemed to have a general knowledge of the kingdom, concerning the place where she had been brought up. Mistaking that she mentioned, his reply led to a belief of its being a considerable distance from the place whither Mr. Bryerly was going. Fidelia was therefore forced to content herself with the idea of at present addressing a letter there. This she accordingly did soon after landing; but no answer being returned, she was compelled to conclude that those to whom it was addressed were either no more, or had changed their abode—a matter which Mr. Bryerly determined on ascertaining, by taking a journey there as soon as the family got themselves settled after their arrival, conceiving it now full time to learn whether there was any one but himself on whom Fidelia had dependence, or rather, more correctly speaking, whether there was any chance of his deriving

advantage from the protection which he had afforded her, and the hope of which was the chief, or perhaps only motive, that had actuated him to do so, for early privations had imperceptibly rendered him selfish and speculative.

Great were the expectations of pleasure which Mrs. Bryerly and her daughters entertained from their visit to Ireland, but which, as extravagant expectations almost ever are, were fated to be disappointed. Years had occasioned changes, which, in place of old intimates, gave to them the faces of strangers, who neither knew nor cared any thing about them. Not without an unpleasant sensation could Mrs. Bryerly walk about D——, where they landed, and which, from being her and Mr. Bryerly's native place, they preferred to any other part of the kingdom, and find themselves stared at as total strangers. Still, however, there were many remaining well known to her—many even nearly connected, and amongst these not

a few who owed her real obligations for kindnesses from her in occasional visits to London, where her house was at all times open to them, and her best services at their command; and in full confidence of receiving every possible attention from these, her arrival was notified to some by notes, and to others by friendly calls: but how great was her indignation at finding these almost entirely unnoticed, and that where the reverse was the case, it was evidently from motives of curiosity, or a wish to excite rankling reflections, by detailing the revolutions that revolving years had occasioned in D——.

The fact was, an intimation of an unpleasant change in the affairs of Mr. Bryerly had preceded them, and the good people of D——, like the good people of many other places, thought it as well to forget obligations, which there was but little chance of ever being repeated. Her mortification at this baseness and ingratitude was unutterable, aggravated as it was

by the disappointment it inflicted on her daughters, who soon began to complain of the neglect they experienced.

At length, unable to endure their reproaches for bringing them to so stupid a place, yet equally so to return to London till their father had got over some unexpected disappointments he had met with in his business, she decided on repairing to Strandstown, a village on the coast, about seven miles from D——, much frequented during the summer on account of the excellence of its bathing, and the fineness of its strand, affording, from its extent and smoothness, a delightful place for exercise. During the season, it exhibited a good deal of gaiety and bustle, but till then had a melancholy aspect, its ranges of closed-up houses giving it the air of a depopulated place. To those, however, who did not entirely depend on varied society for amusement, it was never entirely devoid of interest, its cliffs and caves be-

ing extremely romantic and beautiful, while the extent of its magnificent bay, with the hoarse murmur of its waves, breaking like peals of artillery upon the shore, filled the mind with admiration and awe.

Inanimate objects, however, were not those which most delighted the Miss Bryerlys or their mamma; accordingly, they did not disdain the overtures that were made for an intimacy with them, by the few families that made it their place of abode, consisting of the rector's, an apothecary's (whose little practice compelled him to bear woeful testimony to the salubrity of the place), a coast-surveyor's, and a widow lady, who owned several of the lodging-houses; to which list was to be added, the mistress of the chief hotel, who, after passing half of the year in all the bustle of business, retired for the remainder to enjoy herself, like the bees, on the spoils of the summer. These, with an exception or two, were not exactly the kind of per-

sons Mrs. Bryerly would have selected for associates; but there was no choice, and the snug parties they contrived to form amongst each other soon reconciled her to the circumstance.

Looking to other scenes than the Miss Bryerlys for amusement, Fidelia would soon have delighted in her change of abode, but for the little alteration it occasioned in her mode of treatment. She soon found herself as much excluded here as heretofore from the enjoyments afforded by society, while the disappointment experienced by the family in their high-raised expectations made them often treat her with additional ill-humour. Still, however, a hope of yet receiving satisfactory tidings of those to whom she had long looked forward for liberation from her present unpleasant situation supported her under it.

But she soon found the information she sighed for, she must not yet expect. Contrary to his assurance of hastening to seek

it as soon as he had settled himself at Strandstown, Mr. Bryerly suddenly conceived his house wanted ornament and improvement, and in planning what he deemed necessary for the purpose, quickly relinquished every other idea for the present. Disappointed as she was, still, when she could at times breathe the fresh invigorating air of the cliffs, wander amidst their romantic caves, and trace, in "daisies pied and violets blue," the gradual approach of the spring, she felt cheered and delighted.

She was enjoying a little exercise one day, when she met a miserable-looking man dragging an equally miserable-looking dog to the edge of a cliff, to drown. She instantly interfered, demanding the cause of such inhumanity?

"Och, musha! nothing in the world, Miss, honey, but that myself can't keep him," replied the man. "Things, do you see, Miss, have got cross somehow with us lately; and so, not being able to give a bit, as we used to do, to poor Barnee, he's taken a

little to thieving; and no shame to him, the creature; the devil an honester dog than himself in all Strandstown, if you believe me, Miss, while he had wherewithal; but hunger, as you know they say, Miss, will break through stone walls," and a ghastly smile too plainly indicated his having had but too much experience of its urgency; "and so, Miss, this getting me ill-will from the neighbours. I am forced to make away with him. Myself is almost kilt with grief to do so, and Biddy and the childer are breaking their hearts, crying; but sorrow bit of me can help it—devil a thing we have for ourselves but praties, and little enough of them too."

The compassion of Fidelia being strongly excited, she directly gave him a few halfpence, all she had the power of bestowing, and pleaded so strongly for a suspension, at least, of poor Barnee's fate, who kept all the time looking alternately at her and his master, in the most piteous manner, as if aware there was some parley

going on concerning him, with an assurance of having him at least fed, that she obtained a respite for him. Then inquiring into farther particulars, she learnt that poor Darby, the name of her new acquaintance, was a labourer; that, owing to his having married, contrary to the wishes of her friends, the daughter of a decent farmer, he had ever since been a persecuted man, till at length a growing family impoverishing him, he was reduced almost to the last extremity of wretchedness; to aggravate which, his wife was on the point of lying-in, and they were threatened to be turned out of a miserable hovel, which she had helped him to build against one of the cliffs, because they had not two guineas to pay for it—the rent demanded for it by the neger who laid claim to the spot, but who had never given them any intimation of disturbing them in the possession of it, till they had raised it.

Faintly holding out a hope that things might get better, Fidelia bade him remain

for a few minutes where he was, and speeding back, mentioned sufficient of his misery to the servants to get one of them to return with her with a basket of broken provisions, which had been laid by for chance mendicants, and a promise that whenever there was any thing to distribute he should be remembered.

Fidelia, however, was but too well aware, from the tale he had told, that this would be a relief totally inadequate to that he required. The idea of his being deprived of shelter harassed and tormented her. More than once she meditated speaking to the Bryerlys on the subject, but still shrank from the idea, not because she believed them utterly incapable of feeling, but because she feared, from the slighting manner in which they chose to treat her, the representation of misery from her might not be attended to, and that, instead of serving him by the disclosure, it might be the means of depriving him of the little aid she had procured him. Then she

thought of addressing a letter in his behalf to his hard-hearted landlord; but still, whenever she meditated seriously on the subject, she felt she wanted courage for the attempt.

Having contrived to make a few things for the poor woman, she proceeded to her hovel one morning, and found, on entering it, that poor Darby had not by any means exaggerated the account he gave of his misery. She found the poor woman herself sick and helpless, shivering over the embers of a few turfs that had just sufficed to boil a small pot of potatoes, round which the squalid children, with their father, and poor Barnee in the midst of them, were sitting, with a cup of salt water to supply the place of salt with them.

Fidelia was shocked beyond description at the sight of such wretchedness, so exceeding all she had conceived she should have seen; and to heighten what she felt, Darby informed her he had received an-

other notification from his landlord, informing him if he did not pay what he demanded by the commencement of the ensuing week, he certainly would turn him out of his cabin.

Unable to afford relief, Fidelia could only sympathize. What a lesson was here for fastidiousness and discontent, she conceived! Surely, if such scenes were oftener viewed, there could not be the murmurs she had often heard at trifling disappointments. It was but the preceding day Mr. Bryerly had started from the dinner-table in a rage that absolutely made her tremble, merely because he was disappointed of a particular kind of sauce he expected with a dish of fish; and yet here was a whole family, that of the coarsest plainest food had not sufficient for the support of nature!

Again she meditated an application in their behalf to their landlord, conceiving in the cause of humanity one should have both courage and perseverance; and in

consequence of this meditation, on inquiring more particularly concerning him than she had before done, she now learnt that he was an Englishman, of the name of Peckham, and steward to a lady, who residing chiefly in the other kingdom, occasioned almost every thing to be at his mercy here. He lived in the deserted mansion, Darby further stated, and by one means or other, not of the very fairest, it was supposed, had contrived to realize a very handsome fortune—a circumstance that added to his natural insolence, by rendering him independent of his employer.

Fidelia sighed almost despairingly at this account, so fearful was she of not being able to succeed with upstart haughtiness. While she was considering what she should do, whether she should apply to Mr. Bryerly for his interference, or speak herself for the poor family, Darby, suddenly drawing her to the door, pointed to Peckham, at a little distance in the road.

Fidelia heard no more; determined not

to lose such an opportunity for trying to effect what she wished, she darted out, and speedily overtaking Peckham, begged to know, as soon as she had a little recovered from the flurry into which her haste had thrown her, whether he could direct her to such-a-place, mentioning one on purpose in the direction in which he was going?

He replied in the affirmative, civilly adding, as he was himself going that way, he would shew it to her, if she allowed him.

Fidelia bowed assentingly, and as they walked on, not without her internally smiling from the consciousness of the little stratagem she was using, she proceeded to ask him the names of such and such places they were passing, till at length coming within sight of Cliff Manor, the seat of the Winterfields, she also desired to know the name of that, and on learning it, instantly expressed her wish to be admitted to it—not, she quickly added, for the sake

of viewing its improvements, though such, she was informed, as were well worth seeing, but in order to obtain an opportunity of speaking to the gentleman (as from policy she thought it requisite to designate him) who was then residing there.

In surprise at this declaration, Peckham made a sudden stop, and turning his light grey eyes, at once as dull and as cunning as an owl's, upon her, seemed, by the expression of his hypocritical countenance, undecided what interpretation to put upon it.

Fidelia did not permit him to be long at a loss; she briefly informed him of her motive for what she wished, adding, that she was persuaded Mr. Peckham knew not the wretchedness of the poor family she spoke of, or he never would threaten what he did; and that it was on that account to assure him of it, she wished to have an opportunity of addressing him for a few minutes.

With a dark and scornful frown, chill-

ing to every flattering hope, though a fairer or more energetic suppliant had never yet perhaps pleaded the cause of misery, he was about replying, when one of Darby's little boys came running after her with her ring, which, in noticing one of the younger children, it had contrived to draw from her, by untying the black ribbon to which it was fastened, keeping it constantly in her bosom, suspended from her neck.

As Fidelia was taking it, the eye of her companion was caught by it. He started, looked earnestly, wistfully at it, and then suddenly seizing her hand, as she was about depositing it in her bosom, examined it attentively.

Fidelia was surprised, but for a moment he was too much occupied to heed her; then observing her looks, he seemed to recollect himself, and relinquishing it with an air of embarrassment, apologized for the liberty he had taken. Then, with a countenance so altered as to astonish her, he

proceeded to inform her that his name was Peckham, and that she did him but justice in supposing he knew nothing of the distress of the poor family she had been pleading for, or he never would have held out the threat he did; adding, as a proof of his sincerity, he would not only allow them to remain some time longer in their cabin without molestation, but go there himself, to see what he could do for them.

Whatever was the cause of this sudden change in his intentions, for certainly they were not at first what he now avowed, Fidelia still thanked him as fervently as if unaware of any thing of that kind, and was then taking leave, when, with an air of familiarity that made her involuntarily shrink back, and which rendered his disagreeable features still more unpleasant, he stopped her to inquire her name and residence, saying, they must be better acquainted.

Fidelia immediately acquainted him with the latter, trusting the name of Mr.

Bryerly, who, she was persuaded, must be generally known as a respectable inhabitant of the place, would check any further attempt at freedom.

He nodded at her reply, saying he had heard of Mr. Bryerly before, and would certainly call on him the next day, as he should before, had he known what an attraction his house contained.

Fidelia was not of an age altogether to dislike compliments; she certainly, however, could have dispensed with any from such a being as Peckham. The prejudice she had previously conceived against him was not by any means removed by his compliance with what she wished. He was long, lean, elderly, demurely hypocritical, and spoke in a manner that convinced her he had been born within the sound of Bow bells.

That the Bryerlys would by any means like such a visitor, she could not imagine, and of course apprehended something unpleasant to herself from being the means

of bringing such a person to their house. On one account, therefore, she was agreeably surprised at finding Mr. Bryerly far from displeased at the circumstance. He had long wished for access to Cliff Manor, from the gratifications it was capable of affording him, and, of course, could not but be pleased at knowing a person who had the power of granting him this. In short, in this instance, selfishness got the better of pride, and Peckham was allowed to consider himself an intimate. He either did, or affected at first to believe, Fidelia one of the family, and when undeceived, was even rudely inquisitive about her; this, however, was imputed to his evident ignorance of polished manners.

Whether he knew it was requisite to ensure himself a welcome, cannot be decided; but presents of fish, fruit, game, and flowers, were now continually coming to the Bryerlys; while, whenever Mr. Bryerly pleased, there was the whole range of the grounds for him, in his visits to

which the ladies did not disdain sometimes accompanying him, from the snug parties which Mr. Peckham contrived to form for them, and the pleasure they could not but take in ranging over a house and demesne so beautiful as those of Cliff Manor.

Contrary to their usual custom of excluding her wherever pleasure was expected, Fidelia always made one in their visits to this place; and about this time also an alteration of the most agreeable nature took place in their conduct towards her—harshness and rudeness ceased, and she was gradually taught to consider herself a person whom they again felt attached to. In gratitude and delight at this, all former unkindnesses were forgotten, and the spirits that had so long been depressed again broke forth.

No longer restricted from following the bent of her inclination, her walks now became more excursive; but nowhere did she find such delightful ones as about

Cliff Manor. The house was a modern one, of noble dimensions and fine architecture, and the grounds immediately around it were laid out in an appropriate style. Forming a fine and striking contrast to this recent erection, were the massive moss-tinted ruins of a once-magnificent pile, known by the name of Glenbower; an impetuous mountain stream divided it from Cliff Manor, though constituting part of the domain.

Not immediately, however, was this ancient seat known to Fidelia. The Miss Bryerlys and their mamma were not fond of the fatigue of what is called exploring. One day, however, that they had come early to Cliff Manor, while they were amusing themselves in scanning some volumes in the well-stocked library, and Mr. Bryerly, with his host, was engaged in fishing, she took the opportunity of crossing the stream just alluded to, as she had before been often tempted to do; and hurrying on, afraid of being called back,

soon found herself in a deep hollow, which she would have found it nearly impracticable, perhaps, to have gained, but for the zigzag direction which the descending path took amongst the branching roots of the old trees that trembled over the soil.

The bellowing sound of water through the dell did not tend to lessen the effect its romantic aspect was calculated to have upon the imagination. Here the impetuous stream was lost to the view in a thick shrubbery—there it burst on it in wild eddies amongst the trees, that, climbing to the very summits of the stupendous and ivy-clad cliffs at either side, completely obscured the light of day, in many places, from the sequestered spot, shedding over the whole what might be termed "a brown horror," solemnly impressive.

The murmurs of the wood-pigeons within these lonely bowers had something inexpressibly soothing in them, contrasted as they were with the hollow-sounding

cries of the birds that lived amongst the further rocks.

Delighted, enchanted, Fidelia proceeded, till again ascending, she entered upon an avenue of ancient trees, ending in a spacious court, where, stretched in long perspective, stood the time-struck arches of Glenbower Castle.

Transfixed with admiration, she stood gazing on them: how grand, how impressive was their appearance!—what ideas, at once romantic and melancholy, did they elicit! How did she involuntarily muse and moralize, as she heard the wind sighing gently amidst the long grass that hung streaming from them, and saw the light down of the thistles, that peered up amongst it, flying about her.

Slowly she advanced through them, often tempted, but still afraid to venture through the low doors and dark passages that here and there met her view. At length, emerging from them, she found herself again upon the brow of a steep

bank, with a ruined church before her, that certain appendage to an old castle—since, go where you will in Ireland, you will be sure of always finding one close to the other, owing, perhaps, to the necessity there was in former times for mutual protection. Innumerable records of mortality surrounded it, but all so completely buried in and surrounded by briars and brambles, that Fidelia had not courage to attempt the examination of any of them.

In retracing her way, she mistook it, and found herself in a kind of hall, leading to a steep narrow staircase. Looking up this, she perceived, by the light that streamed down it, through a narrow dusky casement, a chamber at the top. After hesitating a moment, she ventured up, curious to have a peep at this no doubt Gothic room, and found herself in a small one, still retaining in it a few pieces of scattered furniture, proofs of former inhabitation: amongst others was a bedstead.

On approaching to look at this, Fidelia perceived the curtains it still retained rolled back, and fastened with bows of black ribbon—a proof to her, from what she knew of the customs of the country, that the last that had rested on it was a corpse. Involuntarily she drew back—a shudder came over her, and she began to fancy that the room had a damp earthy smell; yet still she lingered, and as she looked about her, could not help wondering that these proofs of what had affected her had not been removed, since, from the dust and cobwebs that overspread every thing, it was plain that a considerable time had elapsed since it, in any way, had been used.

While musing on the seeming strangeness of this, she fancied she heard a deep breathing. A little startled, she hastily descended, and found Darby leaning on a spade, in a melancholy attitude, near the door by which she had entered.

Each seemed surprised at the sight of the other. Fidelia first recovering from hers, inquired what he was doing there?

"Och, musha! the devil a much, Miss, honey!" he said; "I have only been rooting out some of the weeds from the mistress's grave forenent you."

Whom did he mean? Fidelia demanded.

"Ah, then, Miss, did you never hear? Oh, the devil a lie in it, but it's herself, the darling, peace to her sowl!" devoutly crossing himself, "that if one could have seen the rights of it, would have been the owner of this castle. Arrah, then, any how, did you never hear of the family of the Glanmores here, one of our fine ould aunshunt families? It was themselves were of the right sort—none of the spalpeen doings amongst them, as with that neger yonder: signs on it, the devil a farthing did sir Murtogh leave himself; and so he was forced to sell this fine ould place; and somehow after the first husband of ma-

dam Winterfield got all. You may see the flag that covers his ould bones, just by the gable end of the church there: sorrow a wet eye there was when he went to treat as he did, the fellow! the very flower of the flock. Oh, Miss, jewel, it's myself that's almost kilt with grief, when I think of his barbarous usage to him, in sight of his own place."

"To whom?" demanded Fidelia.

"Ah, that's true, Miss, you don't know. Och, if you had once seen him, you'd never have forgot him; it's himself any one might see had the blood of the Glanmores in him—and to drive him to desperation!"

Fidelia now fancied she heard voices approaching, and accordingly, though her curiosity was somewhat excited, made a movement to depart. Suddenly, however, recollecting what she had thought strange in the chamber she had looked into, she stopped to inquire of Darby the cause.

"Och, Miss," he replied, "no one had

the heart to enter that room since the night the poor mistress was waked in it. Besides, they say, Miss, 'tis troubled.

"Troubled!"

"Yes, Miss—that Nic Mooney, that was shot here, walks in it."

"Why, there have been terrible doings here?" said Fidelia.

"Oh, Miss, you may well say that. Could these walls tell what has happened within them, 'tis yourself wouldn't have a dry eye now, I am sure."

Here the nearer approach of the voices she had just heard proving them to be those of Mr. Bryerly and Peckham, all further conversation, for the present, between Fidelia and her humble companion was terminated, owing to the little pleasure she was aware she should have in the remainder of her walk, if joined by them.

Dwelling, however, on what she had just heard, when the party were all collected for dinner, she touched on the sub-

ject, by mentioning her having rambled to the ruins, and the curiosity they had excited to know something of those who had formerly dwelt there.

The satisfaction she wished for, however, she did not obtain. With a significant frown, that gave her plainly to understand the subject she had started was an improper one for the place where she then was, Mr. Bryerly uttered the peevish interjection "Pish!" in reply to what she had said, and immediately started a new topic.

Far, however, from checking the curiosity he thus reproved, his conduct rather stimulated it, by the confirmation it gave to them of the particulars communicated by Darby; and she accordingly determined on availing herself of the first opportunity that occurred, for making inquiries concerning the circumstances that had so awakened it.

But this determination was unexpected-

ly suspended, by the occurrence of matters that entirely withdrew her thoughts from all but herself.

Peckham, who from the first had singled her out in a manner that was extremely unpleasant to her, was on this evening so disgustingly familiar, as to render himself not only odious to her, but to excite in her mind a faint suspicion of his having some particular motive for his conduct—a suspicion that no sooner started, than she shrunk from him, as she would from plague, pestilence, and famine. His conduct not only disgusted but provoked her, by rendering her a kind of laughing-stock to all present. He had contrived to make a party for the Bryerlys this evening, by prevailing on the rector's family, together with the rest of the set Mrs. Bryerly associated with, to favour him with their company—a thing some of them affected to be very unwilling to do, from the inferior light in which they thought proper to consider him.

The elder part of the company sat down to cards, but music was provided for the amusement of the young people. Peckham, who evidently wished to flatter Fidelia, by making it appear to her that he wished to have her thought the queen of the evening, thought proper to open the dance with her: but having about as much idea of dancing as we may suppose one of Orpheus's dancing cows, his movements excited such risibility, as, united to his ludicrous oglings and tender pressures of her hand, made his partner suddenly leave him, not without a determination to quickly check his presumption, if he should annoy her by any further attempts at intimacy.

CHAPTER IV.

"What is this world? Thy school, oh, Misery!
Our only lesson is to learn to suffer:
And he who knows not that, was born for nothing."

THE next day confirmed her vague suspicion: Peckham made a formal proposal for her to Mr. Bryerly, which, to her inexpressible consternation, he fully sanctioned. In vain, when she had a little recovered from the effect its disclosure had upon her, she urged every argument that suggested itself to her against it. Mr. Bryerly was inflexible, and his wife and daughters equally inclined to persecute her.

The fact was, Mr. Bryerly had long since relinquished all idea of her ever being claimed from him, and now conceived it high time to try and derive some ad-

vantage from her being with him. This he conceived he should be likely to do, from compelling her to accept the present overture, as he naturally concluded her doing so would be a means of ensuring to him a continuance of Peckham's attentions, and by degrees perhaps a sufficient portion of his confidence to allow of his joining him in a contraband trade, which it was strongly whispered in the neighbourhood he availed himself of his contiguity to the coast to carry on, and which Bryerly, who delighted in any thing of enterprise or speculation, was almost wild to engage in; while the ladies made no doubt, that from the circumstance they should have the command of all that Cliff Manor could afford for their gratification or amusement. In short, swayed by selfish considerations, they decided on forcing Fidelia to what they could not avoid acknowledging they did not wonder at her having a horror to, so odious and contemptible from character and manner was the hypocritical and vul-

gar wretch that had now the audacity to think of her. Forced to see him, when he came to learn her answer, she briefly thanked him for the good opinion that had, she concluded, alone induced him to propose for her, but assured him it would be throwing away his time to bestow a farther thought on her, as nothing could ever induce her to retract her present positive rejection.—"No time can change me—no circumstance compel me. On your own account, therefore, as well as mine, I beg," she added, "that I may hear no more of a proposition that, to speak with sincerity, I must confess I deem myself degraded by ever having been forced to listen to."

Vain, however, was this firmly-avowed determination; and the new species of persecution to which she was now subjected was more intolerable than any that had preceded it.

"You," cried Mrs. Bryerly one morning to her, in a rage, after finding coax-

ings and threatenings alike unavailing to win her to her wishes—" a creature like you, without twopence, to reject such an offer, when, situated as you are, you should down on your knees, if any one, barely able to give you a shelter, proposed for you!"

" It would be a bad requital to any one who had the generosity to think of me," returned Fidelia, with a forced smile, " to marry them for mere convenience."

" Pshaw! don't give me any of your romantic stuff," returned Mrs. Bryerly: " some one else is in your head, or you would jump at the present offer, I make no doubt."

" Not if I were perishing," replied Fidelia, warmly; " 'tis useless, therefore, to torment me further on a subject on which I am inflexibly decided."

" Decided!—pretty language indeed! And pray, Miss, how long do you think things are to go on in this way?—how long do you imagine we are to allow you

to continue a burthen to us?—how long continue to support you in idleness?"

"In idleness!" repeated Fidelia, involuntarily, and looking down at the scarified fore-finger of her left hand. "Oh, madam!"

"Well, Miss, I don't suppose you wanted to be kept with your hands always dangling before you, like a wax-doll in a glass-case, merely to be looked at?"

"No—God forbid I had any inclination to sloth or idleness, so unbefitting my situation! But in reply to your interrogations, 'tis my wish, madam, to release you from what you consider a burthen, by being no longer prevented making exertions for myself."

"Oh, no doubt! I know you are sick of wholesome restraint; I have long seen that—long seen that you were enraged at being restricted from exhibiting yourself for admiration: but you shan't be gratified—no, you shan't, in seeking for adventures—you shan't get off so easily,

without making some return for the obligations you are under to us."

"No, that she shan't!" vociferated Mr. Bryerly, furiously throwing down a newspaper he had been reading. "Supposing, ma'am, you were allowed to make exertions, as you call them, for yourself, pray how would these enable you to repay me for the expence of bringing you up? Oh, you may stare; but I now tell you plainly, that had I thought you would have burthened us so long, you might have gone to a workhouse for me. People can't always afford to be charitable; and as that was my case, I shall now insist on your accepting an offer that holds out a prospect of remuneration, in some way or other, for what I have done for you."

"Now, how can you be so cross, Fiddy?" cried Miss Bryerly: "can't you at once agree to our having a wedding? Lord, don't you hear of people every day marrying merely for convenience?"

"And consider," added her sister, gig-

glingly, " that the more you dislike your husband, the less you'll grieve for him when you lose him."

" This may be all very laughable to you," said Fidelia; " but," bursting into tears, " 'tis very much the reverse to me.—In pity," turning her streaming eyes upon Mr. and Mrs. Bryerly, " let me be no further persecuted; but, as I supplicate, let me now try what I can do for myself in the world, and in any way desired I will bind myself to be accountable for the produce of my exertions till the pecuniary part of my obligations are at least discharged."

" Come, come—no more nonsense," said Mr. Bryerly, sternly: " you may style persuasion persecution, if you please, but I am resolute in the present instance. I am only acting to you as I would to my own daughters, if they perversely shut their eyes to what was for their advantage: when young people are wilful, force must

be resorted to—in a word, to cut the matter short, Peckham you shall marry!"

"Never!" said Fidelia, firmly.

"We shall see—we shall see," cried Mr. Bryerly, with a deriding smile, as, taking up his hat, he walked out of the room.

So explicit he had not before been, and Fidelia became absolutely terrified. Without the power of appealing to any one to interest themselves in her behalf, she trembled to think what she might be destined to undergo. A state criminal could scarcely be more strictly watched than she now was, lest the persecution she was experiencing should get abroad; whenever the family went out, Peckham was sure to come to keep guard during their absence.

As usual, one evening that they were engaged, he had come for this purpose, when, provoked beyond all endurance, Fidelia no sooner saw them gone, than darting out of the parlour without ceremony, she took refuge in a summer-house

in the garden from the odious companion they had left her.

Enraged at this treatment, and seized besides with a fit of jealousy, Peckham nimbly followed; and finding the door locked, had no hesitation in forcing it.

Terror and rage alike pervaded the bosom of Fidelia at this conduct; pushing him with violence away, as he attempted to seize her hand, she rushed out, and hurrying back to the house, had just reached the staircase with an intention of sheltering herself in her chamber, when he overtook and stopped her. The involuntary scream that burst from her at the instant quickly brought a young Irish lad to the spot, named Conolly, that Mr. Bryerly had hired in London, and, together with an old Scotchwoman long in his service, had brought over to Ireland with him.

"Ah, then, what's the matter?" he cried. "Sure, then, it's not yourself, Mr. Peckham, that's holding Miss Fidelia a-

gainst her will?" striving, as he spoke, to disengage her gown from the gripe of the spiteful wretch.

"What's that to you, you imperent feller?" cried Peckham, who, when he waxed wroth, usually relapsed into his cockney mode of speaking. "You are not to question your betters, I suppose?"

"My betters! Ah, faith, then, barring Miss Fidelia herself, I don't think my betters are now here."

"I'll teach you that, you saucy jackanapes, if you don't take yourself off directly."

"Well, sure, nothing hinders me but wanting to take you off first," laughing, and again trying to release the gown of Fidelia.

"You are an Irishman—any one may see that by your imperence: but it shan't go unpunished."

"An Irishman! faith, and that you may say with your own ugly mouth; and so

was every mother's soul of mine before me, man and woman, God give them a happy rising!"

"Yes—and what's more, an united Irishman. I always thought you no better than you should be, and now I know it."

"Well, we are pretty even with one another: but what's the use now of spitting your venom here, like one of your own English toads?"

"You'll find that: I'll make your master trounce you for your imperence, you saucy varlet!—I'll let him know what I heard you calling me this evening—a wolf in sheep's clothing."

"Well, the sorrow lie in that. I am sure you're as lank and as greedy as a wolf; and is not that a woollen coat?"

"Oh, you want to come off, do you? But it won't do, I assure you."

"Troth, jewel, you were never more mistaken in your life than in thinking so. I am mighty glad I have had an opportu-

nity of telling you a bit of my mind; and if you are not gone speedily, I'll be after telling you more of it. Now, how can such a poor-looking spalpeen as you, the very dirt and refuse of the earth, think the likes of Miss Fidelia would cast an eye on you?"

"An eye! I'd have you to know, I have had the eyes of as comely a maiden as she turned upon me."

"Oh, they squinted, and so you thought so. I remember myself, our parish priest, father Noonen, had a terrible trick of looking two ways for Sunday, so that whenever he took up his glass, I was always bobbing my head in his face, out of manners, thinking he was drinking my health, when all the time his eyes were looking straight forward to the other side of him. Between ourselves, you are a mighty plain man indeed, praised be the Maker! I don't think one could meet with an uglier man than yourself between this and Ratoath; and then such a gassoon—the steward of

Mrs. Winterfield, that upstart herself, to think of looking up to Miss Fidelia!"

The rage of Peckham at these observations was unutterable. The fury it transported him to was but amusing, however, to Conolly; but at length, fearing it might alarm Fidelia, he proceeded to make him let her go.

In doing this a scuffle ensued, that reaching the ears of Conolly's fellow-servant, the old Scotchwoman already mentioned, brought her out from the kitchen with a bellows in her hand. Seeing Peckham hanging like something venomous on Conolly, and being unable to reach his hands, with which he grasped his hair, she directly applied the bellows to his ear, and blew such a blast into it as quickly induced him to relinquish his hold.—"De'il dang me," she cried, with fire sparkling in her eyes, "if I could have got hold of your lug, you should not have had to complain of its being too cold, you spiteful carle!"

" Och, never mind, Janet, my crature!" cried Conolly; " the devil a harm he did me, but comb my glips for me."

Overpowered with rage, Peckham now retreated to the parlour, avowing his resolution of remaining there till the return of the family, that he might let them know how he had been treated.

The moment she was released, Fidelia hastened to her chamber, not a little agitated by the recent scene.

Peckham kept his word; the moment the Bryerlys returned, he preferred his complaint. Conolly listened with calmness to his recital, and when he had concluded, entered upon his defence: but he appealed to partial judges—for his impudent behaviour he should be dismissed, as soon as another person could be got to supply his place.

He received his sentence with a low bow, the object he had in view, in ever desiring to get into the service of Mr. Bryerly, being equally attainable by re-

maining in his neighbourhood, namely, to obtain the power of giving information to others concerning Fidelia.

The moment he was dismissed, Fidelia was required to make her appearance.—"So, here's been a fine kick-up, Miss, through your means!" said Mrs. Bryerly, as she entered.

"It was not my fault, ma'am," Fidelia calmly replied.

"Oh no, to be sure, you didn't instigate the servant to affront Mr. Peckham."

"I disdain replying to such observations," returned Fidelia; "all I shall say is, that I am resolutely determined not to suffer myself to be further annoyed by the person you speak of."

"Come, come, madam," said Mr. Bryerly, in an authoritative tone, alarmed lest Peckham should at last take umbrage at her avowed dislike and contempt, and give her up, an alarm he would not have felt, had he really known the motive that actuated him to seek her hand, "this is car-

rying the jest too far; Mr. Peckham has honoured you above your deserts by his notice, and if still ungrateful for his generosity, and stubbornly blind to your own interest, force shall be had recourse to, to make you act properly."

"Oh, she will yet smile upon her slave," cried Peckham, now choosing to alter his voice and look, and trying to take her hand as he spoke; but at his touch she started back, as from a loathsome reptile, and instantly fled the room.

Her terror at the savage threat of Mr. Bryerly would have been greater, but that, as her agitation subsided, she could not bring herself to believe he would venture to attempt carrying it into effect.

The next morning, the moment almost she appeared, she was informed that she must prepare, immediately after breakfast, to accompany the family to Cliff Manor, where they were going to pass the day. She instantly replied, that after what had happened, she was determined never to

visit there again, while Mr. Peckham commanded.

Rage at this declaration, or rather surprise at the firmness of it, occasioned a silence of a minute. Mr. and Mrs. Bryerly then burst into threats and invectives; but in vain—Fidelia continued steady, at last protesting, that rather than allow herself to be taken there, she would alarm the neighbourhood.

This threat, originating in terror of what might occur, should she be dragged there, had the desired effect in return. The visit to Cliff Manor was given up, and till dinner-time she was allowed to remain quietly in her chamber; but from the sounds that at times reached her, she was convinced there was a good deal of consultation going on below.

At last one of the girls called her down to dinner. Reluctantly she obeyed the summons, but was somewhat relieved by finding the cause of her persecution not there. Sullenness had now succeeded to rage;

none of the party spoke to her, and in this gloomy and unsocial way the evening passed.

She had not quitted her room the next morning, when Miss Bryerly came bouncing into it.—"Good news!" she cried; "so, for Heaven's sake! let's have none of the lachrymals of yesterday—I am sure it was enough to put any one in the horrors the way we passed it. Bab and I have been invited for a week to D——; and the moment you left the parlour last night, we set to work, and never ceased till we got leave for you to accompany us. So you have got a respite, you see; and in the mean time, before you return, who knows what may happen; you may change your mind, or Peckham be induced to give you up."

Fidelia's joy at this communication was only equalled by her surprise, for it was the first time she had ever reason to imagine the Miss Bryerlys interested about her—on the contrary, that they did not

delight in having her plagued; but in the sudden gratitude now excited, all previous unkindnesses were forgotten, and yielding to the impulse of her affectionate heart, she threw her arms round Miss Bryerly's neck, and delightedly kissed her.

Buoyant with renovated hope, she descended to the parlour, where Mr. and Mrs. Bryerly received her with a kind of stiff graciousness, and who, after expatiating on the obligations she was under to their daughters for their good-nature, told her, they hoped the longer time that was now allowed her for deliberation would not be passed in vain.

Fidelia evaded a reply, but determined they should not long remain unapprised of her decision. Convinced from this, that her persecution from them was not at an end, she resolved on addressing a letter to the post-master where her nurse had lived, requesting to know whether he could give any information of her or the Beaumonts. Fearful of being watched at D—— by

the Miss Bryerlys, she determined, if possible, to write this letter before she went there, and entrust it to the care of Conolly, should she get an opportunity of speaking to him. This she accordingly did, but not of writing, so closely was she watched.

Forgetting something in the parlour, she was sent down for it, and there she found Conolly removing the breakfast-things. He immediately addressed her, with an apology for his boldness, as he termed the liberty he took, but said he could not think of going away, without first trying to learn whether he could render her any service.

Fidelia thanking him, and expressing her regret for being the means of his losing his place, replied, perhaps he might, as she had some very particular friends——

More she was not allowed to add, Mrs. Bryerly at this instant calling to her from the head of the stairs, where it seemed as if she had been listening.

Breakfast was scarcely over, when the

Miss Bryerlys began looking out for the chaise which was to be sent from D——, they informed her, to take them there. But the morning wore away without bringing it. The dinner-hour came—tea succeeded, and still it did not make its appearance, to the extreme wonder of the fair expectants. At length, when all hope of its coming seemed to be relinquished, it drove to the door.

Mr. Bryerly immediately hurried out, to rate the man for his negligence in not coming at the time appointed.

The man protested it was not his fault, but owing entirely to their house having had a sudden and great call for horses that day.

Mrs. Bryerly now affected to think it was too late for the girls to set out; but they being all impatience, and the man besides declaring that he was compelled to return that night, whether they came or not, and that the road was perfectly safe, an assurance confirmed by Mr. Bry-

erly, she at last consented, to the no small joy of the anxious Fidelia.

The Miss Bryerlys were all glee for some time after they set out—they did nothing but laugh and joke; at length it struck Fidelia, that the road they were going was much narrower and worse than the one they had come from D——.

Scarcely had she made the observation, when, pretending she was cold, Miss Bryerly drew up the windows, which, being half wood, prevented any prospect. In a few minutes after this, during which they were often jolted in a manner that made them almost scream, the chaise suddenly stopped, and a loud altercation of voices at the same instant was heard.

Extremely alarmed, Fidelia made an immediate effort to let down a window; but which was prevented by Miss Bryerly, who sat in the middle, catching her hand. The noise, however, increasing, and with it her terror, she could no longer be prevented; forcing away her hand, she

let down the window, and to her inexpressible surprise, on doing so, dusky as was the light, perceived they were close to the antique gate of Cliff Manor.—" Why, good Heaven! what's the meaning of this?" she exclaimed.

" Och, nothing more, Miss," cried a voice that she instantly recognized for Conolly's, and who, as he spoke, came to the chaise door, " nothing more in life, Miss, jewel, than that you are where you didn't expect to be. This spalpeen, instead of going forenent him, as he should, to D——, has all this time been turning about like a dog after his tail, till he has brought you to Cliff Manor. I had a little business here myself, and so the moment you drove off, I ran here by a short cut myself, and seeing the chaise, I just stopt it, to tell the driver his mistake; and here he has been wishing me all manner of bad luck for my kindness—the devil return the compliment!—telling me it was no business of mine."

" And he told you what was right," said or rather screamed Miss Bryerly, bending forward. " You are an impudent officious fellow, interfering in what does not concern you! Your business here was all a feint, I am convinced, to let you see what was going on. We are at Cliff Manor, certainly—there's no use in further humbugging; so, Miss Fiddy, you'll sit quiet, if you please, for there's no use in resistance."

" Good God! have I then been deceived!" exclaimed Fidelia, with hands uplifted at this barbarity, this enormity. " How great is my gratitude for the timely discovery of this treachery!" Then desiring Conolly to open the door, with his assistance she quickly disengaged herself from her enraged companions, who, while they strove to hold her back, shrieked aloud for assistance.

All this while a friend of Conolly's was holding the horses; and as she alighted, she saw another man standing in the dark

shadow of the steep rocky bank that completely fenced in the road on one side.

Having extricated herself from the chaise, she was turning to remonstrate with the Miss Bryerlys on their cruelty, and endeavour to prevail on them to return with her to Strandstown, when the voice of Peckham, hurrying out in consternation at hearing the cries of the Miss Bryerlys, united to that of their father at the same moment galloping down the road, and loudly hallooing as he approached, to know what was the matter, made her rush towards the bank, up which there were paths leading to the fields.

The stranger she had just before noticed lurking in its shade sprung forward as she did so, and snatching her from the ground, paused not till he had got her over all impediments that briars, brambles, and loose stones threw in the way of the ascent: Conolly and his friend closely followed.

As soon as her feet again touched the

ground, the former stepping forward, desired to know where the friends lived she had been mentioning to him that morning, as there was now nothing for her but to go to them with all speed.

Fidelia wrung her hands. Alas! the friends she had alluded to might be no more; or if even in existence, the distance at which she was led to imagine their habitation precluded all idea of being able to set out for it immediately.

All the horrors of her desolate situation now rushed upon her mind; she had quitted the only protection she had in the world—perforce, it was true, but that could not alleviate her feelings at the circumstance, when she reflected it was without having any other secured—without possessing the means of even ensuring herself a temporary shelter. She groaned in anguish of soul unutterable; the cold dews of terror burst from every pore—her eyes were uplifted to heaven, till the light forsook them from their streaming, and she

fell fainting into the arms of the stranger who had hitherto assisted her.

Was it fancy, or did she really, as she was recovering, find herself pressed to a heart that from its violent palpitation seemed to her as if beating with strong emotion at the moment? Was it fancy, or did she really then feel lips cold and trembling as her own, at the instant pressed to her damp cheek? As they were unclosing, her eyes were naturally uplifted to those of the person on whose shoulder she was reclining, and fully encountering his at the moment, she started in surprise at the idea of having seen him before. Oh yes—it was the smile, the sweet, the resistless smile that beamed over his features, as she gazed almost wildly at him, left her no room to doubt an instant longer its being the stranger she had met at Hastings she now saw.

An involuntary exclamation, indicative of the sensation she experienced at the circumstance, burst from her.

"You recollect me, then, I perceive?" said he, still smiling.

"Recollect!" repeated Fidelia. Then with a deep blush at the emphasis of the expression, she more calmly added—Yes, she seldom forgot any one she conceived herself obliged to.

"How flattered am I at the idea of being regarded in that light by you!" he replied, "more especially as I was led to fear," and he looked a little reproachfully at her, "that I was not to hope for any further notice from you."

Fidelia, in unutterable confusion at his allusion to conduct which she had ever felt to be ungracious, hung her head, unknowing what to say, since she could not account for it.

From this painful state of embarrassment she was suddenly relieved by Connolly, who, during her fainting, had run off, and now returned to tell her he had procured her accommodation, not only for the night, but as long as she liked, at the

house of a widow woman hard by, called Judy Macquire, where she would be as snug and cosey as she could desire, and be free from all harm, both without and within.

This information was consolation indeed to the sinking heart of Fidelia. The ensuing day she decided on setting on foot her inquiry after the Beaumonts, and if it should prove unsuccessful, or if she should find them disinclined to serve her, then, in that case, to dispose of her ring, which from various circumstances she had now reason to imagine of much greater consequence than she had at first done, and with the produce of it pay for all present accommodation, and endeavour then to procure, with what remained, some means for future independence.

But though somewhat quieted by this feasible plan, the idea of the light in which her fugitive condition must make her appear, she was convinced, to her companion, overwhelmed her with distress. More

than once she was nearly tempted to enter into some little explanation relative to herself, but was still checked by the evident necessity there was for circumspection in her present situation, and the impropriety there would be in doing any thing that had a tendency to establish a confidential acquaintance with a person of whom she knew nothing, or rather of whom, more correctly speaking, she had been cautioned to be on her guard: yet that that caution was not a just one, the pain she felt at the light in which she probably now appeared to him was a convincing proof—a pain so great as to deprive her of the power of thanking him for his present attentions, when, on reaching her destined shelter, the arm that had supported her trembling steps thither was withdrawn, and with a fervent wish for the repose of the night recruiting her exhausted spirits, he took leave.

CHAPTER V.

———————" We have slept together;
Rose at an instant; learn'd, play'd, eat together;
And wheresoe'er we went, like Juno's swans,
Still we went coupled, and inseparable."

THE aspect of her hostess did not tend to lessen her dejection; it answered every idea she had ever formed from fancy or description of that of a hag. Shakespeare's Weird Sisters, Otway's Hag, and the limping one that so long tormented the merchant, in the Tales of the Genii, were all brought to her recollection by the countenance of Judy Macquire. Her manners were by no means more amiable than her looks; she mumbled and muttered, and when Fidelia thanked her for the ready accommodation she had given her, merely

nodded in reply. Her cottage, however, was neat and comfortable, and in joy at finding herself where she was assured of being safe, Fidelia tried to reconcile herself to what was disagreeable.

While Judy was most ungraciously completing the preparations she had commenced making for her, Fidelia took an opportunity of again expressing to Conolly her regret at the idea of having been the means of unsettling him.

"Och, don't let that fret you, Miss. The devil a word of lie in it, but if they hadn't discharged me, I'd have discharged myself, I believe; for you must know, Miss, honey, the mistress and the young ladies were mighty troublesome and cranky; and if they don't give me a character, I have a friend who will give me a fine beautiful one any day in the year, if he don't take me to live with himself again, long life to him!"

"What, the—the gentleman we en-

countered so unexpectedly?" said Fidelia, stammering a little, and involuntarily looking down.

Conolly answered in the affirmative.

"And pray who is he?" asked Fidelia.

"He, Miss? he?" cried Conolly, stammering so as to be scarcely articulate, and colouring violently. "What, do you mean him? Oh, he——Did you never, Miss," suddenly changing his tone, "hear of the Grandisons hereabouts, one of your fine ould ilegant families? They have a house hard by here, and it's there there are the doings—that is, I mean, 'tis there there were the doings; for now they are all dead and gone and scattered, excepting just the heir."

"And this is he?" Fidelia was on the point of saying, when Judy, calling to Conolly from the adjoining room to assist her in removing some article of furniture, prevented her; and when he returned, he appeared in a violent hurry to be gone, merely stopping to say he would be with

her early the next day, to receive any commands she might have for him.

He departed, without her having a suspicion of the real extent of her obligations to him. Led by various circumstances to suspect there was something plotting against her, he set himself to watch; and by what he thus further overheard and observed, was almost confirmed in this suspicion. This, however, was after she had spoken to him in the parlour, when no opportunity again occurred for giving her a hint of what he thought. In consequence of his fears, however, he no sooner saw the chaise drive off, than by a short cut, as he himself stated, he ran off to Cliff Manor, with a young man to whom he imparted them, determined on rescuing her, though at the hazard of his life, if the treachery he apprehended had been resorted to. No common interest actuated him to serve her, though he was bound by the most solemn promises not to reveal it to her, at least for the present.

In his hurry to descend the bank contiguous to the Manor gate, he fell.

"D——n you, you scoundrel!" exclaimed a gentleman, riding by at the instant, whose horse was so startled by the manner in which he came tumbling almost headlong into the road before him, as to be scarcely manageable for a minute or two, "what do you mean? You have nearly got my neck broke."

Conolly in an instant was on his feet, and seizing the bridle of the restive animal—"Oh, master, jewel!" he exclaimed, "is this you then? Well, if this isn't a tumble into good luck!—'tis no matter."

"Ah, I might well have known it was you, you blundering rascal! But what mischief are you about now?"

"Is it mischief? But wait a bit. But," patting the horse's neck, "isn't this Jokeby, the ilegant crature? Faith, and it's himself, that throws up his head as high as ever." Then in a hurried manner he briefly accounted for being there.

The particulars he gave excited a degree of interest and curiosity, that induced the person to whom he gave them to decide on witnessing the issue of the adventure.

How this, through his prompt assistance, was in a degree concluded, need not be again detailed: suffice it, whatever interest he had previously experienced was redoubled tenfold, when he found that the person whom he had assisted to snatch from a fate hateful to her, was the being whom of all others he was most anxious about. That she was the person he conjectured, he would not permit himself to doubt, because the persuasion gave a sanction to the sentiments that had involuntarily pervaded his mind for her; but still, on many accounts, it was essentially requisite that he should have undeniable proof of this. Her precipitate departure from Hastings prevented his there endeavouring to obtain this satisfaction: for this purpose, he traced the Bryerlys to their re-

sidence in London; but there all further clue was lost, for by that time they had embarked for Ireland, and, from some certain embarrassments, had taken measures for preventing its being generally known whither they were gone. He now, however, trusted he should be able to obtain the information he so anxiously solicited. Conolly, however, affected utter ignorance of the point he required to be enlightened on, being alike enjoined to conceal, not only from Fidelia herself, but every other person, whatever he knew concerning her. Had he known, or surmised, however, the motive for the inquiry now concerning her, it was an injunction he certainly would scarcely have attended to.

Fidelia gladly retired to repose, or rather to her chamber, soon after his departure, so truly disagreeable was her hostess to her, for repose was not immediately to be thought of, in the distracted state of her mind. Should the Beaumonts be no more, or should they be disinclined to

serve her, how appalling might be her fate! The plan which but a few minutes before had quieted her, from its seeming plausibility, now, on more mature reflection, failed to afford consolation, from its vagueness and uncertainty. She wept, she wrung her hands, and nothing but her strong reliance on Heaven prevented her, in this moment of desolation, from sinking into utter despair.—"And oh!" she exclaimed, "were all to feel what I feel for the want of relative protection and kindness, the social ties of life would not be so often disregarded as they are. But, alas! such is too frequently the perverseness of human nature, that blessings possessed are not always valued as they ought to be. Oh! did those who are impatient of a parent's control know what it is to be deprived of a parent's tenderness, with what meek submission would they bend to it? Did the too-often wrangling offspring of a family know what it is to stand alone in the wide world, without a natural claim on any one for sympathy or kindness, how

firmly would they be united, and gratefully bless the kindred chain that bound them to each other!"

At length the honeyed dew of sleep fell upon her wearied eyelids, giving her a transient respite from anxiety and sorrow. Early, however, she awoke; and, her heart heavy in her bosom, sought, at the cabin-door, relief to its heaviness from the freshness of the morning air. But the chillness of the dawn had not yet given way, nor the vapours that shrouded the valley in gloom entirely dispersed, and the cheerless aspect of all without heightened, if possible, her dejection. But at length the mountains began to clear, the sky to kindle with blushes; and as she gazed on the glorious spectacle of the rising sun, heard the wild warblings that burst from every bush, the soft lowings from the hills, and beheld the old trees of the soil gently swayed by the breath of morn, the divine hymn of our first parents was remembered, and she could not forbear thinking that every thing

was endued with living instinct, to do homage to Him "who out of darkness calls up light."

In the awakening of nature from repose, the mild tints that mark the break of day, its dubious gloom and tender twilight, there is a pensive charm that, penetrating to the heart, excites the most delicious feelings, such as soften to melancholy, and sooth to romantic musings.

There was nought peculiar to the hour but what gave rise in her bosom to luxurious sensations—the freshness of the cool breeze that sportively uplifts the filmy gossamer, the fluttering of the insect hosts, the twittering of the birds, the glittering of the dewdrops in the spreading ray destined to exhale them—emblematic of man to the moralizing mind, too often blind and misguided, exulting in the very circumstance destined to occasion his ruin.

While thus engaged, Judy was within, preparing breakfast, but not with alacrity did she set about it. Though early as the hour was, a basket had arrived at her cot-

tage, that one might have supposed would have put her in good-humour from its contents: but Judy was truly what might be called a person of a cross-grained disposition, one who delighted in thwarting and vexing others.—"Fine hyson!" she exclaimed, as she unpacked the basket. "Ay, it's a fine thing to be young and handsome. Mundungus was thought good enough for me. Treble-refined sugar too! and wine too! and cakes, and veal!—Marry come up! she that with her teeth could get through any thing! but I might munch away long enough at tough beef, or keep Lent on salt herrings, before I'd be thought of. A likely story, to be sure, they've told me! devil run away with the liars! and so, because he has given me this bit of a shabeen house, and fifteen pounds a-year to keep the wolf from the door, I am to be made a convenience of, sorrow take his impudence!"

The soliloquizing Judy's cabin (for to better understand her own thoughts she

generally repeated them aloud) stood in a vale, fronting a distant ridge of mountains, and directly at the foot of another. A few scattered hovels stood near it; and, further on, the mansion which Fidelia was led to imagine belonged to the Grandisons.

Fidelia could not avoid feeling some anxiety to hear a little more of the owner of this, as, from what Conolly had said, she concluded the stranger to be; and accordingly, when at length ungraciously called in to breakfast, endeavoured to introduce the subject by speaking of his supposed mansion: but Judy would not allow her to succeed, pretending to be too busy about one matter or other to be able to attend to her; and certainly she had enough to occupy her, between the pig coming in to pay his morning compliments, with a snout by no means of the cleanest description; and next all the cocks and hens, with a whole tribe of geese and turkies, which, not choosing immediately to

retire, kept up such a screaming, and racing, and fluttering about, that, together with the spitting of the cat as they approached her, and the growling of the dog when they disturbed him, soon made the place resemble Bedlam.

Breakfast over, Fidelia would have written her intended letter, but no materials were to be procured for the purpose; she was fain therefore to wait patiently for the arrival of Conolly. Contrary to her expectations, however, he came not, and her inquietude at length became intolerable. More than once she felt almost inclined to try and get Judy to go up to colonel Grandison's, to make an inquiry concerning him, but still checked herself, lest, if overheard by the master of the house, it might be misconstrued into a wish to force attention from him. She wondered, would he think of making any inquiry about her? Whether she had inspired him with any interest, she could not decide; but it was but natural to suppose he had a sufficient degree

of curiosity to render him solicitous to obtain what information he could concerning her, so that by this time, she concluded, the strange circumstances in which he found her placed were accounted for to him.

Little was she aware how entirely she engrossed his thoughts at the moment! The circumstances just alluded to heightened his previous solicitude for the information he desired; but how to obtain this was the point. His real motive for it he had reasons for not yet wishing to avow, yet without assigning it, he knew not what other to suggest. Perhaps the interest he had both now and previously evinced for her, might lead her gradually to repose confidence in him, if an opportunity for conversing occurred. To obtain this, he conceived no place could be more propitious than that where she now was, and accordingly he decided on contriving a pretext for sending Conolly out of the way the next day, till it would be too late for

her to repair to the friends to whom, thro' him, he learnt it was her intention to repair.

To appear indebted to chance for what he was solicitous of, namely, an opportunity of conversing with her, appeared to him the best mode of proceeding. Accordingly, in the course of the morning, he slowly passed Judy's on horseback, but the object he sought was not visible; he feared alighting, lest a premeditated visit should occasion her to avoid seeing him, well aware of what he conceived she must feel of the delicacy of her situation.

But though not seen, Fidelia had seen. She was standing at the window as he rode up, but instinctively drew back at the moment. Scarcely had he passed, however, ere she thought she had done wrong in avoiding such an opportunity of thanking him for his assistance on the preceding night.

Restless and languid, she at length ventured out, fully persuaded the Bryerlys

would never seek her where she was, and trusting to meet Conolly on the way. Involuntarily her steps turned in the direction of the colonel's supposed dwelling. It was an antique mansion, standing high, in a garden so crowded with every thing that was sweet and delicious, that the air around was absolutely embalmed with fragrance, and the Peris of the Indians might here have been satisfied to hover.

The exhaling sweets had a voluptuous effect on the feelings of Fidelia; she perfectly luxuriated in them—not without recollecting what is said in the Guardian of the effect of flowers upon the nerves and fibres of the brain resembling that of fine music upon the mind. There was a look of happy comfort about the house inexpressibly pleasing.—"Ah, what a delightful residence!" she thought. She sighed, and leaned her face, with half-closed eyes, against the railing, as if to exclude images that could never be realized: "oh no, no!—never—never!" she uttered aloud.

A rustling amongst the thick foliage that overspread the railing on the inside made her start.—"Good Heavens!" she ejaculated to herself, fearful, from her confusion, of having given utterance to all that had been passing in her mind at the moment, had she then been overheard. But no—all again was still. Her ear then had deceived her, or else it was the zephyr she had heard, rifling sweetness from the flowers. She tarried no longer, however.

Her first inquiry on regaining Judy's was after Conolly: no Conolly, however, had made his appearance, and of consequence she became more disquieted and perplexed.

Whilst musing on the circumstance, an itinerant harper came to the cabin. Being a privileged visitor, he was immediately asked in, but declined Judy's proffered hospitality till he had done something to earn it; accordingly he seated himself on the turf-seat at the door, and continued playing there a considerable time. At

length he came in, but left his harp without.

Fidelia, whom his strains had soothed, took his vacant seat, and lightly swept the chords, but almost as unconsciously at the moment as the wind touches the Æolian harp: but this abstraction did not long continue. She was passionately fond of music; and notwithstanding all the impediments thrown in her way, had, through the force of genius, and by dint of perseverance, made herself a perfectly-accomplished mistress of it.

She was bending over the instrument, lost to all external objects at the moment, when the whine of a dog made her look up, and she beheld Grandison standing beside her, in an attitude of motionless attention, with a large dog at his knee, who not being quite so much charmed as his master, had taken this method of expressing his impatience to be gone.

At once surprised and confused, Fidelia was starting up, when, with a kind of

gentle violence, he prevented her, entreating her not to make him consider himself an intruder, by punishing him in this manner.

Thus entreated, Fidelia could not refuse. Languid and inert before, spite of her diffidence and agitation, how differently did she now perform—now that she had a listening ear to charm—now that she beheld an admiring eye gazing on her with rapture! But what a numbness often seizes the faculties—how dull, how torpid do they become, without such a stimulus—without the consciousness of there being some person to be interested by their exertions! Grandison was indeed all ecstacy; and still as he praised and pleaded, Fidelia, like "Hope, enchanted, smiled and waved her golden hair."

At length she rose, but not directly to retire within. Twilight was just beginning to be brightened by a flood of silver radiance, whilst all around was beginning to be wrapt in stillness.

As almost unconsciously she stopt to contemplate the lovely scene, Fidelia was imperceptibly led to converse with her companion with less restraint than she had before done, when Conolly came suddenly bolting before them, and after the pause of a minute, beckoning Grandison away, told him he wished him to return to the house directly, in order to listen to the communication he had to make him.

Grandison hesitated. He had flattered himself, from the manner in which Fidelia was beginning to converse with him, he was drawing her towards the point he aimed at: Conolly was so urgent, however, that having told Fidelia he would not wish her good-night then, as he should hope, from the delightfulness of the evening, to find her still out enjoying it when he returned, he suffered himself to be prevailed on to return with him to the house in which, on her account, he had now taken up his abode. But when, after hearkening to what he had to say, and which, to

his extreme anger, he found of little consequence, he proceeded to go out again, he found the door locked. Conolly was instantly called; but though he acknowledged having locked the door, he denied all knowledge of the key.

"That is impossible, sir!" said Grandison, in a fury; "you can't have forgot a thing you had in your hand but a minute ago; so produce it instantly!"

"Ah, then, what signifies about it?" cried Conolly; "somehow, I dare say, I'll be able to make it out by morning."

Grandison could scarcely command himself. He turned into the parlour, whither Conolly directly followed.—"Devil burn the key!" he said; but if there was any message to Miss Fidelia, he could open a window, and take it himself.

"You, you rascal!"

"Yes, myself; for if I am seen at Judy's cabin, speaking wid her at this hour, no harm would be thought of it; but, master dear, that wouldn't be the case if you were,

and when once bad thoughts are raised, or fools' tongues set a-going, God only knows where the slander may stop; and, ilegant as she is in shape and feature, and every inch of her a lady, yet she's like myself, depending perhaps on a good name to get through life; and since that's the case, sure it's not yourself, with your own noble heart, that's the friend of the poor and the unhappy, and the unbefriended, that would be after doing any thing to injure her, the crature?"

The fact was, Conolly conceiving it utterly impossible for Fidelia to be viewed without admiration, and conceiving the business on which he had been sent on that day a very vague one, began suddenly to conceive ideas very injurious to the honour and generosity of his present master —such as were rather confirmed on finding him, on his return, with Fidelia, but such as he never for an instant would have yielded to, if aware of Grandison's own surmises concerning her. Had it been any

other person, so far from troubling himself on the subject, he probably would have deemed the suspected gallantry of Grandison very justifiable: but Fidelia was a being of whom even a thought of injury was not to be entertained—in whose defence neither rank nor power could prevent his stepping forward.

"Injure her!" repeated Grandison, emphatically; then checking himself, afraid of betraying too much, he took up a book, for the purpose of getting rid of Conolly. He saw the suspicion he entertained, and, convinced he should confirm it by persevering in his original intention, relinquished it.

What had just occurred rendered him still more aware of the delicacy due to the peculiar situation of Fidelia; and he accordingly now rather resolved to expedite than retard her removal to her friends, since, under respectable protection, there would be a proper sanction given to any attention she received from him.

"Injure her!" he warmly repeated, as he walked about the room, musing on the recent incident: "no, dear girl! the claim of unprotected innocence on my honour and generosity is in thee doubly heightened. Though all that the voluptuous imagination of the libertine must delight to dwell on, yet of thee a thought less pure than thy own inspirations never pervaded my breast. Could passion sway, the memory of the action would check the impulse, and in the act of grasping thee as my victim, I should recoil with horror at the deep damnation of the deed. Pure, innocent, and lovely as thyself, be thy life!—may thy virgin cheek never know any other blushes than those of modesty and feeling—thy soft bosom ever remain a stranger to the pangs of remorse, the embarrassments of guilty shame!"

Meanwhile Fidelia continued loitering before the cabin-door, till the sinking of the moon no longer allowed her a pretext

for continuing out. From a deep reverie she was suddenly roused by catching the eyes of Judy intently fastened on her. Almost starting, with a deep blush of confusion she stammered out something of her surprise at Conolly's not having come for the letter he had promised to take for her.

"He, the spalpeen! sorrow bit of him, I dare say, has thought another word about it." She then proceeded to ask Fidelia whither she wanted it sent?

On replying—"To Cooleamere," she repeated—"Ah, then, what should hinder you from being after taking a walk there yourself, instead of putting your friends there to the cost of a letter?"

Fidelia answered—"The distance."

"The distance!" the other repeated contemptuously; "ah, then, is it of a bit of a walk of only five miles you are speaking?"

This brought about an explanation, and to the inexpressible joy and surprise of

Fidelia, she now discovered that Cooleamere was really no further off than the distance just mentioned from her present abode.

"You know it then?" said Fidelia; "and since you do, know something perhaps of the family of Mr. Beaumont there?"

"Ah, then, you may say that: many a fat goose, and good hin, and fine basket of fresh eggs, I've sold to madam there; and many a good glass of the creatshure I've got from her, long life to her for that!"

Having satisfied herself concerning the Beaumonts, Fidelia next inquired about her nurse; but of her Judy could tell nothing more than that she heard she had gone to America.

Judy having drawn from her fair guest the motive for her strong anxiety to visit Cooleamere, proposed they should set out for it the next morning, by dawn of day. This proposal, however, did not by any means emanate from a wish to oblige Fidelia—her nature indeed must have under-

gone a thorough change ere any wish of that kind respecting any one could be entertained, but entirely to a malicious and covetous hope that her hurrying her away in this manner might occasion vexation and disappointment to others, and allow her to appropriate to herself entirely the various things sent in for her use.

Fidelia assented, but in a few minutes after, impelled by a feeling she scarcely liked to acknowledge to herself, said she did not think it absolutely requisite they should set out at the very early hour first mentioned. Judy, however, was positive; and, as a plausible pretext for being so, pretended she had some geese to take to Cooleamere, which, if not early there with, she might probably be obliged to bring back with her.

Forced to acquiesce, Fidelia strove to lose her involuntary chagrin at the circumstance, in joyful anticipation of the next day.

By the time appointed she was ready,

and having partaken of some girdle bread and a bowl of milk with her hostess, they set out together, Judy with a basket of geese at her back, which soon, either disliking this mode of conveyance, or else being as spiteful as herself, began pulling and plucking at her head, in such a manner as occasioned many stoppages, with numerous exclamations of—Wasn't she to be pitied?—and that it certainly was the devil's own breed she had on her back!

Their way led through the mountainous ridge at the back of her cabin, where every thing was so still, so sterile, and so wild, that but for the sight of a lonely hovel now and then, with the encounter of a car carrying turf from the neighbouring bog, Fidelia would almost have been tempted to imagine herself remote from any inhabited place; and here she could not help wondering, as she had often done before, when her eye, ranging over a vast extent of country, scarcely saw a vestige of inhabitation, where the immense popu-

lation of the place was lodged, for immense she knew it to be, from the crowds that on a Sunday surrounded the chapel, or on a holiday were seen loitering along the roads; so that from this circumstance she was almost tempted to suppose that, like the followers of Roderic Dhu, they lay concealed amidst the heath of the desert, ready to start up at the first sound of alarm, or intimation of festivity.

But sterile as was the general aspect of the country in this direction, her admiration was even here often excited by the rich colouring that frequently met her eye. Nothing could exceed the gorgeous effect produced by the bright yellow and purple of the furze and heath, with which nature had here, in various directions, spread patches of the rocky soil.

But though Judy declared that a walk of four times the length could not fatigue her, and stumped away indeed in a manner calculated to gain credit to the assertion, she passed not a cabin without stop-

ping to sit down awhile, sometimes under the pretext of getting her pipe rekindled (without which she would as much have thought of going out for any distance as a German postillion), sometimes to have a little gossip, so that the patience of her companion was nearly exhausted; for having once quitted the place where she had involuntarily wished to linger a little longer, she was all anxiety to find herself at Cooleamere.

At length the well-remembered steeple of its little church met her view, and presently after a number of other equally-familiar objects. Tears of joy and delight filled her eyes at the recognition, but speedily were these feelings damped by the sight of her poor nurse's cabin, not merely untenanted, but in ruins.

This was not a time, however, for the indulgence of the sensations its desolation excited. Accompanied as she was, she had attracted notice; she hurried on accordingly, and soon after beheld the wood-

bine-covered dwelling of Mr. Beaumont. It stood by the road-side, divided from it by a small court; behind was a garden for use and ornament, and a beautiful meadow, extending to the very edge of the cliffs that extended along the coast, and where, on a fine day, it was delightful to sit and listen to the rippling of the waves below, watch the distant vessels, and contemplate the white foam of the surge, that broke against the widely-severed and immense headlands that constituted the magnificent but dangerous bay of Strandstown.

Albina was setting some flowers in the court. Fidelia tried to accost her collectedly, but the effort was beyond her power. She threw her arms round her neck, and as she pressed her to her bosom, sobbed upon it the joy of her heart at this meeting.

The loved companion of her infancy had never ceased to be tenderly remembered by Albina; her delight, therefore, at this instant was not inferior to Fidelia's.

Their mutual exclamations soon attracted the notice of Mr. and Mrs. Beaumont. The explanation Fidelia gave was brief: when she had concluded, Mr. Beaumont, taking her affectionately in his arms, bade her dismiss all care for the present, as she should remain with them, and participate in whatever indulgence they had the power of giving their Albina. Whose joy or gratitude (hers or Albina's) at this declaration was greater, it would be impossible to say; and at length she flattered herself she had surmounted the perils of her state.

CHAPTER VI.

" Thus in assemblies have I seen
A nymph of brightest charms and mien
Wake envy in each ugly face,
And buzzing scandal fill the place."

Mrs. Beaumont, however, by no means participated in the lively satisfaction of the rest of the party. Fond of her own enjoyments, and anxious to give to her idol Albina all the extraneous advantages of dress, she very little relished the idea of any unnecessary expence; besides, Fidelia was so extremely beautiful, she might prove a dangerous rival to her darling: altogether, therefore, she conceived Mr. Beaumont extremely imprudent and absurd in the promise he had made, nor could she forbear imparting to him her opinion on the subject at the first opportunity.

He would not, however, be persuaded to think as she did. The expence now incurred was too trifling, he contended, to be thought of; besides, their Albina required a companion of her own age; and what unspeakable delight, he added, must it afford them, if yet able to think, that through the protection now afforded her, they were the means of having so interesting a creature happily settled, and rescued from all the dangers to which beauty so exquisite as hers was likely to expose her.

"Beauty!" with a peevish "pish!" Mrs. Beaumont repeated: did he then indeed think her so handsome—handsomer than Albina?

"Why, perhaps, natural partiality would prevent my acknowledging that," he replied, smiling; but those not actuated by a similar feeling might perhaps confess they did.

This was an unfortunate assertion for poor Fidelia: from that moment Mrs.

Beaumont decided on doing every thing in her power to keep her in the background.

Unsuspicious, however, of having excited either envy or ill-will, Fidelia might now be truly said to enjoy, for the first time since her infancy, something like happiness. Nothing could possibly be kinder than the general conduct of the family towards her, with now and then the exception of a little pettishness from Mrs. Beaumont, but which, ascribing to some natural infirmity of temper, and not any premeditated petulance, she overlooked. She had now those advantages she had long sighed for—access to a good library, and the conversation of persons calculated to improve and delight her mind.

Mr. Beaumont was a man of a good and well-cultivated understanding, and derived inexpressible pleasure from assisting her in those studies which she had hitherto not been allowed to prosecute in the manner she wished. As a means of prevent-

ing an inordinate love of dissipation or pleasure, he had cultivated a taste in his granddaughter's mind for all that was both useful and ornamental, so that she could not even ramble over the solitary fields in their neighbourhood without deriving amusement from the knowledge he had imparted.

With what additional pleasure did Fidelia now begin to view the bespangled face of nature, now that she gradually acquired a knowledge of the names and virtues of the various plants and wildflowers, that by their varied hues gave such a rich colouring to its surface! In studies or retired walks Mrs. Beaumont did not interfere; but whenever an intimation was given of introducing her into company, she always made some excuse or other for avoiding this.

In their immediate vicinity there was no opportunity for an introduction of the kind, but two or three miles off there were a few families, with whom they kept up

an intercourse, and at whose respective houses they often met with a good deal of company. Beyond the society thus afforded, Mr. Beaumont did not wish his granddaughter to go, conceiving in this there was every chance of her meeting with such a match as he could wish her to form. Mrs. Beaumont, however, whose aspirings were infinitely more lofty, could not be prevailed on to confine her to it. There were balls and assemblies continually at D—— during the winter months, and of these she determined she should be a frequenter.

With the immediate inhabitants of this town she had no acquaintance, consequently knew nothing of their extreme particularity with regard to those they thought proper to admit to their society. A complete line was drawn, and to obtain this honour it was requisite there should be some undeniable proof of rank or fortune—real intrinsic respectability was a thing of no consequence. Now it so hap-

pened, that though the Beaumonts were not acquainted at D——, they were still, in a degree, known there, through the families already alluded to; and a report prevailing that Mr. Beaumont had once been a tradesman in the North, and nothing in his mode of living leading to a supposition of his having realized a sufficient fortune to wipe away the degradation this attached to him, an idea of his family presuming to enter an assembly composed of the elegant, the enlightened, the polished inhabitants of D——, never once entered their heads.

Mrs. Beaumont having made up her mind to her granddaughter's mixing in the assemblies there, made several efforts to have her introduced to them by some one of the families they visited, but still failed of succeeding; at one time there was not room for her in their carriage —at another they did not exactly understand that it was then intended they should go; and so on they still continued

one excuse or another for disappointing Mrs. Beaumont, positively decided against chaperoning a person they deemed of too little consequence to wish publicly to appear acquainted with.

At length, tired by these continual evasions, though without suspecting the real cause of them, Mrs. Beaumont, on the sudden announcement of a charity-ball, to which a particular introduction, as to a subscription one, was not requisite, decided on going herself with Albina; and in order to render the party pleasanter, she made it a point that a Mrs. Cobbs, the widowed owner of a small tenement contiguous to her own residence, with her two daughters, should accompany them.

A native of D——, and consequently acquainted with the ridiculous, perhaps ludicrous distinctions, that prevailed there (for those who made them were themselves of a class of society that elsewhere would have been considered of no consequence), Mrs. Cobbs, whose husband

had been a tradesman of the place, vainly endeavoured to excuse herself from accompanying Mrs. Beaumont there on this occasion, but, from a feeling of pride, without assigning the real cause of her objection.

At length it was decided as Mrs. Beaumont wished, and also that their intention should be kept secret; the idea of the surprise their unexpected appearance there would occasion heightening not a little the pleasure Mrs. Beaumont anticipated from the circumstance. An elegant dress was bespoke for Albina, and on the appointed evening they set out for a hotel in D——, where, on descending from her toilet, Albina absolutely astonished her companions by the splendour of her dress; several tasteful and costly ornaments, which had not before been shewn (from the strictures Mrs. Beaumont was aware they were likely to incur from Mr. Beaumont), being now displayed.

The ball-room was filling fast by the

time they entered it. Albina, a little shy on this her first introduction into public, proposed, instead of immediately parading it, they should take a seat for a few minutes, in order that they might look more collectedly about them.

Reluctantly her grandmother acquiesced, impatient to exhibit her beautiful form to the view of, she made no doubt, admiring gazers. While sitting, the reconnoitring glances she threw round her soon discovered, as she expected, several of her neighbours: but what was her surprise—what her disappointment and mortification—when, instead of coming up to her as soon as they saw her, she clearly perceived them doing all in their power to avoid catching her salutations! But this was not all: dancing commenced without Albina's being asked to stand up; while still, as various detached parties rudely brushed past them, they heard invidious remarks, accompanied by significant glances, on the

very indifferent company that was present that night.

In short, the principal set were absolutely astonished—astounded—at seeing her and Mrs. Cobbs there. How could they have the courage, the temerity, to enter an assembly consisting of the first class at D——?—"But these kind of charity-balls always render one liable to something of the kind," cried Mrs. Dawdle, animated by her indignant ire to an unusual display of energy this evening: "I protest, therefore, I believe in future I shall take tickets, without coming to any thing of the kind again."

"Laws, mother! and I'm sure I hope not," said one of her eternally-smiling daughters, with the most Audrey-like tone and look imaginable, "for I'm sure it's vastly amusing to see such strange people—don't you think so, Essy?"

"Dear, how odd you are, Lizzy!" replied the other young lady, with a similar simper—"you ask such droll questions!"

This, however, was a very unmerited accusation, for any thing like drollery was a very great stranger to the Dawdles.

"I vow I believe I shall unite in the resolution with you," said Mrs. M'Snipwell, the wife of a counsellor, who owed his origin to a knight of the sheers, but which circumstance, in consideration of the fortune his industrious sire, by dint of good custom and perseverance, was enabled to leave him, was overlooked, except when now and then a boisterous and arrogant pretension to wit and consequence disgusted sufficiently to occasion a recurrence to past times. This, however, was seldom the case in D——; for, provided the elegant and enlightened beings who composed the first class there were convinced there was fortune to support arrogance, none could be more submissive to it.

"Lord! what signifies?" exclaimed Mrs. Shandy, the self-satisfied and important wife of a vulgar attorney, who, wanting practice elsewhere, had come to D——,

where, by dint of entertaining, he so completely succeeded in inducing the people of D—— to believe him a man of consequence, that, spite of vulgar manners, vulgar person, and bad education, he obtained a wife, and business sufficient to at length enable him to realize the fortune he had at first only pretended to from motives of policy—" 'tis really gratifying to see new faces;" an assertion no one would have wondered at, if acquainted with those she was in the habit of contemplating.

But indignation at the appearance of Mrs. Beaumont and her party in the ball-room was not the only sensation excited. Envy, of the most malignant nature, was excited by the beauty and appearance altogether of Albina, such as rendered those who experienced it delighted at having what they conceived a fair pretext for trying to mortify and expose her to scorn. But as a very contrary sensation to envy was the one, it must be supposed, she inspired in the other sex, it may create sur-

prise that from them she received no notice or attention. The fact was, the beaux of D——, like the ladies, saw no charms where they thought there was no consequence; and as to the few officers that figured away on this night in the room, they had been taught to set too high a value on their attentions to throw them away on a person pronounced by every one to be nobody; so that, had she in reality been what she was styled, she could not have been less regarded.

At length Mrs. Softly, the neighbouring rector's wife, thought proper to advance to pay her compliments, fearful, if she continued to play shy, as she had done at the commencement of the evening, she might lose, in a degree, that universal character for amiability she had obtained. She approached with her usual fixed smile, said her usual nothings with the same air of interest, and was beginning to re-establish herself in the good graces of Mrs. Beaumont, when, unfortunately, her son

coming up to inquire, in a whisper—but a whisper which Mrs. Beaumont perfectly distinguished—whether he should not now ask Albina to dance? She replied decidedly in the negative, saying Miss M'Snipwell was just disengaged; thus proving, beyond a doubt, that whatever her professions were, they were not the dictates of sincerity.

At last, vexed, mortified, disappointed, beyond language to express, Mrs. Beaumont and her party took themselves off. Tears of vexation, in spite of her efforts to suppress them, burst from Albina at the evening she had passed, so very different from what she had expected it would be, both from the reflection of her glass, and the flattery of her companions. What could be the reason of the neglect she had experienced? Exclusive of personal attractions, her general appearance, she was aware, was such as to have entitled her to attention.

But the mystery was soon solved, when,

in the course of a day or two after, the kind of treatment they had experienced slipped out from Mrs. Beaumont in confidential chat with a friend. Mrs. Owens assured her it was entirely owing to their having gone with Mrs. Cobbs, now, for the first time, entering into an explanation of the particularity of the people at D——.

Mrs. Beaumont rated her for not having done this before; and from scolding her, she began to scold at poor Mrs. Cobbs, protesting it was extremely stupid of the poor woman not to avow the real cause of the disinclination she had evinced to go to the ball, and which, she now saw, was owing to her being one of the proscribed, choosing to forget, that from her husband having also been in business, she was one of these herself. Nothing but an unwillingness to let him know the mortification she had incurred, by acting contrary to his wishes, which were expressly against her going to the ball, prevented her im-

mediately breaking with those she had hitherto been in habits of intimacy with. But though she did not choose to evince it in this manner, her resentment continued unabated; and to have an opportunity of yet retaliating on them for their rudeness and illiberality was one of her most ardent wishes.

She was in this frame of mind when Fidelia became the inmate of her dwelling; but the envy with which she regarded her was a stranger to the bosom of Albina, who was not one of those characters that could hear "sighs from another with unwounded ear." Far from desiring to eclipse, she did every thing in her power to set off her beloved companion.

Fidelia was just beginning to feel herself truly domesticated, when Mrs. Beaumont was surprised one morning by a visit from lady Caroline Ayrcourt, a married niece of the earl of Fitzossory, who, with her mother, the countess dowager De Bellemont, had come over from England to

pass some time at his lordship's seat, Rock Fort, in the neighbourhood. She was a gay, beautiful, young woman of fashion, and nothing could possibly have been less expected by Mrs. Beaumont than the honour she now did her, as she had not an idea that she was even known by name to her ladyship. How she came to be so, lady Caroline did not think proper to explain: all she said was, that there was a ball about to be given at Rock Fort, and that she had been deputed to select all the beauty, elegance, and fashion of the neighbourhood for it, and had accordingly turned her steps to Mrs. Beaumont's.—"So, remember, ma'am," she added, "you will positively be expected, with your granddaughter, or granddaughters, for I believe you have some other young person with you?"

"Oh yes!" with generous eagerness, replied Albina, who happened, just at the moment of her ladyship's arrival, to come in from the cliffs for a book, where she

had left Fidelia collecting sea-weeds for some landscapes they were forming of them, "there is a young friend residing with us."

"Well, you and your young friend," said her ladyship, smiling; "but, upon my word, if she resembles you, however lord Fitzossory may thank me for having secured such ornaments for his assembly (from the effect their presence there is likely to produce), I don't know whether his male visitors will have reason to do so."

She then hastily bade them adieu, leaving behind her a most pleasing impression.

Mrs. Beaumont was all rapture. How flattering, how transporting, to be invited to Rock Fort—invited, too, in so particular a manner! What a prospect did it open of enabling her to triumph over the odious, the illiberal, the detested inhabitants of D——! With what contempt did this sudden elation now make her look down upon those she had lately been wishing to shine amongst! But she had indeed heard many

anecdotes and particulars concerning them from her confidential friend, Mrs. Owens, that had considerably lessened the idea she had once entertained of their consequence, and with it her wish for their notice.

Fidelia was quickly called in to share in the delight of her friend.—"We must begin immediately to prepare dresses for the occasion," cried Albina. "I have already fixed on them: mine shall be a blue sarsnet, with a coronet of white roses—yours shall be white satin, trimmed with silver, with the pearl ornaments in your hair grandmamma purchased for me."

Fidelia laughed.—"White satin and silver trimmings for me! Why, my dear girl, I believe you are going to play the part of Cinderella's godmother. Pray, have you a pair of glass slippers also at your command?"

"You may well laugh, indeed, or conclude Albina is turning you into ridicule," said Mrs. Beaumont, in a vexed tone.

"No—that I never can conclude," cried

Fidelia, throwing her arm round Albina's neck, and fondly kissing her forehead: "'tis her too great love for me that induces her to forget what is strictly proper. If I go to this ball, and I confess I delight to think I shall, my garb must be a simple muslin."

"In fixing on such a dress," said Albina, in her turn laughing, "do you not, Fidelia, recollect those beautiful lines of Ben Jonson's we so much admired the other day?

> "Give me a look, give me a face,
> That makes simplicity a grace;
> Robes loosely flowing, hair as free:
> Such sweet neglect more taketh me,
> Than all the adulteries of art—
> They strike mine eyes, but not my heart."

The point was not settled when Mr. Beaumont made his appearance; and on hearing what had occurred, testified scarcely less pleasure than the rest of the party, though not exactly from the same motives. The fact was, it was with the family of

Fitzossory that Mr. Dundonald was connected by marriage; and could an interest be awakened in them for Albina, he conceived such a circumstance might be a means of obtaining for him the accomplishment of his long-cherished wishes—namely, to have justice done to the memory of his daughter by Mr. Dundonald, on which, notwithstanding all his precautions, he had reason to fear a stigma here and there affixed.

A few miles from the dwelling of Mr. Beaumont, on a wild and romantic part of the coast, near the entrance of the magnificent harbour of D——, and facing the beacon-light on the opposite coast, stood the rude old towers of Rock Fort, well calculated, from their antiquity and still-formidable aspect, to arrest the wandering eye of curiosity. One or two of them were ascribed to the Danes, while the others were so almost equally discoloured and indented by the devouring cormorant, Time, that, but to the nice eye of an antiquary,

their origin appeared as ancient. The connecting buildings were evidently more modern, but from this circumstance forming altogether a heterogeneous kind of pile, massive and irregular, but certainly extremely picturesque, backed as it was by trees and thickets, spreading far over the fantastic cliffs, and accordingly, perhaps, better harmonizing with the scenery around, than one of more recent date or regular construction.

Time immemorial this ancient pile had been in possession of the lords of Fitzossory, and here, under the immediate eye of his grandfather, the presumptive heir to their ancient honours, Rodolph Morven, was principally brought up. By superintending his early education himself, his grandfather trusted he should yet see him advocating the cause of his countrymen, oppressed in his idea, and gradually leading to that emancipation that would permit those whom worldly policy had tempted to apostatize from the faith of their

ancestors to quiet their consciences by returning to it. The most bigoted of men to every national prejudice, and implacably resentful of political injuries, whether real or imaginary, he could not bear reflecting on the alienation of the properties of the old Irish families, or the restrictions imposed on account of religion. These sentiments he took no pains to disguise; on the contrary, there was a kind of imprudent openness, or rather defying boldness, in his character, that made him ever eager to disclose what he thought; and many were the fears his friends had once entertained of his involving himself in some unpleasant predicament. This, however, he had sufficient discretion to avoid, not so much from personal considerations, as on account of his darling Rodolph, lest his giving way to the impulses of a turbulent spirit should in any manner turn out to his injury.

Chiefly brought up amidst scenes that early invited to energy and enterprise, and

accustomed to stimulating recitals of valour and heroism, Rodolph grew up with a predilection for a military life, which, on completing his collegiate education, he was allowed to indulge. His pleasure at the accedance his wishes met with was heightened by the hope it held out (freeing him, as it did, from the immediate observance of his grandfather) of enabling him at length to follow the dictates of his heart, long yearning towards other ties—that kind, that affectionate heart, replete with every noble, every generous feeling.

Lord Fitzossory, in railing against political policy, what he termed arbitrary restraints on feelings and principles, forgot, as we all are very apt to do, that what he condemned in others he was himself practising. Though naturally frank and generous, he had for several years suffered selfish fears and motives to warp him from his natural integrity. But to explain the cause of this, it is necessary we retrograde a little.

Of a numerous offspring, lady Eva Morven was the only survivor, a circumstance that doubtless rendered her still dearer to her parents. She was about seventeen when she lost her mother, an event that so deeply affected her, as to render change of scene advisable. Accordingly her alarmed father took her to Bath, where his sister, the countess De Bellemont, was then residing, and where, by dint of persevering attentions, and the progressive influence of time, she gradually became sufficiently recovered, at length occasionally to mix in the gaieties of the place.

Fair, innocent, and unassuming—heiress to an ancient title and considerable estate, it is not to be supposed she wanted admirers.

Amongst those who felt or feigned a flame, was a Mr. Grandison, a gentleman of high fashion, pleasing exterior, and captivating manners. The passion she inspired him with was of the most ardent

nature, such as, independently of all worldly considerations, would have induced him to solicit her hand; though undoubtedly a fortune almost inextricably involved, through a long course of dissipation, rendered these considerations not to be overlooked. But had he been possessor of the first title and fortune in the kingdom, the circumstance of his being an Englishman would have been sufficient to have induced the earl to disdain his addresses. Among his deep-rooted prejudices was one to England. In the character of an Irishman, all that was great, noble, generous, he conceived comprised; and to an Irishman he had long and firmly decided she should alone give her hand.

Lady Eva was fond of her own country, but not so blindly partial as not to be able to see a great deal to admire in another. In this the gay and handsome Grandison was included—a circumstance she had not address to conceal from the

earl, and which so alarmed him, as to occasion a total prohibition to all further intercourse between them.

In consequence, the attentions of Grandison became discontinued in public, but only to be renewed where there was no restraint upon them. The earl thought himself guarded on every side; but Grandison was too enterprising to be easily deterred from any favourite pursuit. Like the enamoured Romeo, he found means of surmounting the difficulties thrown in the way of his access to his mistress—a mistress too young, romantic, and impassioned, not to be delighted with this mode of making love. Walls scaled, and dangers braved for her sake, was an idea on which she could not help dwelling with pleasure; nor did she know how to wish a courtship terminated, carried on in so delightfully agitating a manner.

The ardent and impetuous Grandison, however, could not long remain content with mere permission to breathe a world

of sighs beneath her window, and wish himself a glove upon her hand, that he might touch her cheek. The constant risk they ran of being surprised, and of course separated, was urged with such persuasive eloquence, as at length to have the effect of inducing the equally timid and romantic Eva to consent to an elopement.

The rage of the earl at this may be easier conceived than described: every hope seemed in a moment annihilated—the hope he had long indulged of his wealth and consequence centering in his own country. Had she allied herself to one of the wildest—the most untutored of her own countrymen, he felt persuaded he could sooner have forgiven her, than for her marriage with an Englishman—a selfish cold-hearted Englishman:—that was unpardonable: and cursing the hour in which he had exposed her to the temptation of disobeying him, he returned to Rock Fort, heartily wishing those who had instigated him to leave it, to the devil.

On their return from the shrine of the Northern Hymen, no time was lost in soliciting forgiveness by the runaways, to their utter mortification and disappointment, however, without avail, lady Eva having assured herself, that though the earl's consent to her marriage with Grandison could not be obtained, yet once solemnized, and his forgiveness readily would. Trusting, however, they should yet find him more exorable, they set out for London, where the *début* of lady Eva was marked by the utmost splendor; nothing, indeed, could exceed the style in which they set out, and for a time none were more talked of or caressed in the fashionable world; but for their celebrity in this they soon dearly paid, involved as the property of Grandison previously was.

He had flattered himself that the well-known expectations of lady Eva would have prevented any thing unpleasant occurring from the extravagance into which he now launched; but he soon found him-

self wofully mistaken: her expectations were certainly very well understood; but as it was equally so, that not one of these was to a certainty, and that to appearance she had irreconcilably offended her father, these did not by any means prove sufficiently satisfactory to stop the importunities of impertinent creditors.

Absolute distress at length impelled lady Eva to apply again to the paternal heart for pardon. Her Rodolph was born about this period, and she trusted the announcement of his birth would have a happy effect on the feelings of the earl. She was mistaken, however, as it had no other than that of suggesting a scheme that induced him still to appear inexorable.

Hurt and alarmed, lady Eva passed another year of wretchedness, when despair induced another effort to work upon his feelings, her husband being then in hourly danger of imprisonment. This was the moment the earl had anxiously been anti-

cipating; he had set his heart on having his grandson committed to his entire care; and nothing short of ruin, he was convinced, could induce the parents to accede to a proposal that must occasion an entire estrangement between them and their child, for within his doors he was determined never to admit the father.

For the first time, he now noticed the supplications of his daughter, informing her, that on condition she gave up her boy to him, he would relieve her from the difficulties in which a worthless husband had plunged her.

This, to such a heart as hers, was a hard condition; but there was no alternative between acceding to it, or suffering distress she shrunk from the idea of. Accordingly the little Rodolph was sent over to Rock Fort, and thus for ever taken from the maternal bosom.

The earl's promise was fulfilled, and for the first time since their marriage she and Grandison found themselves free from em-

barrassments; but she was not destined long to enjoy the change in her situation. The anxieties she had suffered had weighed heavily on a constitution naturally delicate, and in less than a year after the relinquishment of her boy she was no more.

A vague intention of yet recalling her to his arms had ever been entertained by the earl; but believing he could do this whenever he pleased, and that the longer he withheld his forgiveness, the more it would be prized when granted, he lingered and hesitated, till all opportunity for extending it was over.

His grief was wild and terrible, heightened as it was by remorse. He now, when the reflection could be of no use, dwelt with agony on the idea, that never, never but in one instance, and that an excusable one, had his mild, his tender Eva ever offended him.

Oh, what would he not have given—how would he not have humbled himself, to have recovered the opportunity he had

lost of assuring her of his forgiveness, and soothing and comforting her last moments! but remorse was vain—all he could do, in expiation of his conduct, was to vow, if possible, still tenderer care of the treasure she had resigned to him.

At his express desire, her remains were brought over; and after lying for a few days in state in the ancient hall, where it seemed as if it had been but the preceding one, so quickly pass away the fleeting moments of our existence, that she had been seen in all the light of beauty, were removed to the family burying-place, amidst an immense concourse, or, as it was styled, gathering of people.

The pale chaste light she loved so well, the light of the moon, shed its soft tremulous radiance over the solemn scene, forming something of that kind of contrast to the red glare of the funeral torches, that her gentle unassuming character did to those it was her lot to be thrown amongst by a thoughtless husband. Like a lovely beam,

soon had she vanished, leaving in all the grief and darkness of desolation those allied with her.

CHAPTER VII.

" Lest men suspect your tale untrue,
Keep probability in view."

THE sorrow of the widowed husband was not less than that of the bereaved father, and, like his, aggravated by remorse, convinced as he now was, that the anxieties he had been the means of her experiencing had had an injurious effect upon her health. His only consolation during this period of distracting grief, was in conversing of her with a young friend whom chance had brought her acquainted with, and for whom she had conceived such a predilection, as to be induced to invite her to be-

come an inmate of her house. The bosom of the sorrowing Sophia was her pillow during the last hours of her existence, and till the removal of her remains she watched beside them; she then returned to the protection she had left to become her guest. Hither the steps of Grandison continually wandered, and an attachment gradually took place, that at the end of a year led to their marriage.

Nothing could exceed the rage of lord Fitzossory at hearing of this: he conceived it an insult to the memory of his daughter, for whose sake, notwithstanding the youth of Grandison, and that he was besides entirely deprived of his child, he was unreasonable enough to think he should have remained single.—"But I might have been well aware," he cried, with spiteful anger, "that, like the rest of his countrymen, he had not warmth of heart sufficient to cherish a lasting remembrance; but never, my blessed Eva, never shall thy angel boy—never shall thy laughing

Rodolph, be subjected to the tyranny of a cruel stepmother; this event decides me on never allowing the slightest intercourse between him and his unfeeling father."

But in imagining that by permitting this he would have exposed him to any unkindness, he was utterly mistaken—his own mother would not have more fondly cherished him than her successor. Like her, she was gentle, benevolent, and kind, conscientious in the discharge of every duty, and incapable of any act that could occasion censure from herself or others.

The prejudices he himself entertained, lord Fitzossory early exerted himself to instil into the mind of his grandson; but nature pleaded powerfully against their admission. There was something in the name of father that interested and attached his young heart. The brother too he understood he had, he yearned to behold and embrace; but lord Fitzossory could not bear the idea of an indulgence that might in a degree detach him from himself. Ac-

cordingly he left nothing undone that could prevent his soliciting it; and at length, by dint of artful management, so far succeeded, as to occasion Rodolph to feel something like pique and indifference, at the conviction he was led to entertain of being utterly disregarded by those he had been so solicitous about.

As a means of still further estranging him, he early gave him a companion of his own age, the natural son of a deceased kinsman, whom, partly out of policy, partly compassion, he had adopted.

But a person more calculated to take advantage of kindness, he could not possibly have introduced into his house than Walter Blaney. Artful, selfish, and unfeeling, he had no study but his own interest—no gratification but his own enjoyments. He early ascertained the earl's chief inducement for adopting him, and, from selfish motives, did all in his power to second his object in doing so, namely, to attach Rodolph in such a manner as

should prevent his seeking in a nearer connexion for a friend.

Participating, through the mingled policy and generosity of the earl, in all the advantages bestowed on Rodolph, he was likewise informed, when the latter had decided on a military life, that a commission should also be purchased for him in the same regiment.

No sooner did he learn that this was the earl's intention, than he resolved on taking measures for preventing it: for, exclusive of his natural love of luxurious enjoyments, he conceived there was extreme folly in any one voluntarily risking their life in any case whatever. If he sought the bubble reputation, he determined it should not be at the cannon's mouth; besides, he conceived it would be very bad policy indeed to quit the Castle at the time when the absence of Rodolph might not only allow of his strengthening his own interest with the earl, but also perhaps of undermining his. Accordingly, soon after

the earl's generous intention relative to him was announced, for which nothing could exceed his gratitude and joy, he got a terrible as well as unseen fall, that occasioned a lameness, which the surgeon he chose to have to attend him declared he thought it possible he might never get the better of: of course, all idea of his then entering into the army was abandoned; but not to sink in one place while he rose in another, or gain ground here while he lost it there, he resolved on trying to prevent any intercourse between Rodolph and his family when he quitted Ireland, lest the attachment that might take place between him and his brother might weaken his own interest with him.

The confidence which the unsuspicious Rodolph reposed in him gave him an opportunity of forming a regular plan for the purpose. Though hurt at what he conceived their neglect and indifference, evinced by no inquiry of theirs concerning him ever reaching his ear, yet imbued with every

dutiful and affectionate feeling, he confessed to Walter it was his intention to introduce himself to them on going to England, could he ascertain their residence; for the purpose of trying to learn which, he desired him to employ a friend of his, then in London, at the Temple.

Walter readily undertook what he desired. Corney, the young student alluded to, was his bosom friend; and through his instructions, in due course of time, wrote a letter, well calculated to make Rodolph believe those he sought after unworthy of his notice.

After a little previous matter, to render what followed more plausible, it thus went on.—" And now, my dear fellow, having told you all the chit-chat of the circles I move in here, and which, thanks to the introductory letters of my friends at the other side, are not of the most inferior description, I hasten to inform you of my having succeeded in obtaining you some information of the Grandison family,

through means of my friend, Miss Dash-away, who, as Sancho Panza says, knows but every one. She informs me, that Mr. Grandison has been most ridiculously extravagant; but that it is now rather the general belief he would make an effort to retrench, but for the pride, vanity, and dissipated turn of his wife and son, who make their knowledge of his connexions through his first marriage an excuse for their conduct; and indeed it is confidently said, that in order to try and force him to apply to these, and thus be furnished with fresh supplies for their extravagance, they have purposely created embarrassments, by appropriating to other uses than were intended, or rather to securing private resources for themselves, a considerable part of his property. Whether all this is really correct, I am not competent to decide; this however I will venture to say, from my own personal observations, that the son is one of the greatest dashers about town—a buck of the first order on the *pavé*

in Bond-street—a noted amateur in the pugilistic art—a famous member of the four-in-hand club—a leader of every fashionable row in public—and a practised adept in all the mysteries of play."

Unsuspicious of any deceit, Rodolph could not deny credence to what he now heard, and grievous were his consequent feelings; for fondly had he cherished, notwithstanding transient fits of pique and resentment, the hope of finding, in so near a relative, one worthy of being his friend. But at his period of life, was not a hope to be entertained of yet being won from his follies and his errors—of the example and precepts of one of his own age exciting him to their conquest? Yes, the first burst of his sorrowing and indignant feelings over, he thought it probable; and accordingly, as he revealed it to Walter, decided on the trial, should nothing in the interim occur to induce a greater belief of his unworthiness.

Ere the shock inflicted by the account

received of him had well subsided, a letter, to his utter surprise, was received from him, imploring him, if he had any regard for his father, immediately to transmit to him, Hastings, for his use (for without his privity, owing to the delicacy of his feelings, he averred his writing), the sum of seven hundred pounds, the amount of a debt due to a clamorous tradesman, whose name, with other particulars, he gave him.

For some time after the perusal of this letter, Rodolph hesitated how to act; then blushing at the idea of distrusting a brother—of thinking him, notwithstanding what he had previously heard, capable of the meanness of premeditated imposition, he determined on running every risk to comply with his request. Any thing like the sum required he had not at his command, and knew that without a recurrence to falsehood, he could not obtain it from his grandfather. To Walter, therefore, he applied on the subject, and, through his exertions, at last obtained it. But

scarcely was it remitted, ere some expressions, apparently dropped without thought by Walter, occasioned such uneasiness, as induced him to desire he would again employ Corney in making inquiries.

This he accordingly feigned to do; and the result was, that as he, Walter, had desired, he had seen Mr. Sparkle on Mr. Grandison's affair, who, in reply to his questions, informed him he had the preceding day taken unpleasant measures for the recovery of his debt, instigated to them by seeing his puppy of a son dashing through Bond-street in a new curricle of the most expensive description. Sparkle further added, these measures had in a degree occasioned him to be satisfied, Mr. Grandison having immediately insisted on his lady's returning some very expensive ornaments which she had obtained without consulting him; and in consequence of her giving them up, the writ was withdrawn.—"How the blade," Corney went on, "continues to dash about in the man-

ner he does, considering the apparent involvements of the father, is a wonder. Wonders of this nature, however, are common here. Many suspect the mamma has accumulated a private purse, or cares not how they act, from still relying on the connexions by the first marriage. Be this as it may, without vanity, I believe Mr. Hastings Grandison might style himself a good financier."

"A good financier, indeed!" cried Rodolph, as he indignantly threw the letter from him. "He must be a little cleverer, however, than he is, to raise the supplies his extravagance may need again, as he has done the last. No—if after this I were to allow myself to attend to any representations of his on the subject, I should have to accuse myself of reprehensible weakness —of tacitly encouraging vice and falsehood."

But how insupportable to think, that there where his affections turned, he could only distrust and condemn. Unable to

endure the thought, he quickly decided on addressing a letter to him on his conduct, which, that he might be sure of reaching its destination, was forwarded to Corney for delivery.

In due time an answer through the same channel was received, in which the supposed writer, instead of denying the trick played upon Rodolph, with the greatest effrontery acknowledged it, protesting that nothing but his utter inability to obtain from old Squaretoes the supply of the needful just then requisite, should have induced him to it.—"But, curse me," he added, "if I could do any longer without a new curricle! for my last, like an old almanack, was quite out of date, being more than a year old, and no longer fit for any thing, but some whimsical tourist like Syntax, to penetrate into the bowels of the land in, in search of the picturesque. But rely on it, my dear fellow, that the first handsome sum dad comes down with, or a lucky hit of the dice, throws into my

pocket, shall be appropriated to the discharge of the obligation. But, to be candid, if Fortune does not prove kinder than the old gentleman is likely to do, I fear some time must elapse ere I can refund; for curse me if he's not grown quite miserly! whatever generosity he might have possessed certainly evaporated in the days of his youth. Preaching—preaching—preaching—I wonder he is not tired of his own prosing; may I be shot if I would not almost as soon be distanced at Newmarket as listen to him! *Entre nous*, however, I think a turn for sermonizing runs in our family—your letter to wit, which is certainly a *morceau* of its kind, coming from an Irish lad too. Oh then, faith! and it's myself will be after shewing it yet to the old gentleman, to give him the consolation of knowing he has not two sons graceless alike. By-the-bye, I understand your neighbourhood is famed for pretty girls and good shooting: faith! one of these days, I think I shall take a sail

over to you, for I am devilish fond of starting coveys of the former at least; though perhaps you allow no trespassing on your manor; well, *nous verrons*, and so at present, receiving every requisite fraternal assurance, believe me yours."

The mingled levity and effrontery of this fabrication excited feelings of indignation, that were with difficulty suppressed; but of what avail to give utterance to them, except to provoke further proofs from the supposed writer of a mind insensible of shame, and callous to reproof? Alike disgusted and incensed, all previous wish for a personal knowledge of him was relinquished, to the overthrow of a thousand fond anticipations of happiness and pleasure he had indulged of his being associated with him in the career of glory.

In this career he himself rapidly advanced—more, if possible, than fulfilling the expectations of his idolizing grandfather; and at length, loaded with honours bravely won, returned, after a long course

of services on the Continent, to Rock Fort, improved in every manly grace, and altogether one of that kind of beings which the eye could not see without admiring—the heart know without loving.

Such was the family, and such the particulars of it, that the Beaumonts were so delighted at the idea of being noticed by. A sister of the late countess of Fitzossory was the lady to whom Mr. Dundonald had been first allied; and from the consequent connexion between the respective families, they conceived it might yet prove highly advantageous to Albina to have an interest experienced for her by that of Rock Fort.

A visit from Mrs. Owens completed the exultation of Mrs. Beaumont at the invitation. This was a lady who, having very few concerns of her own to attend to, was extremely mindful of those of others, and whose means for enjoyment not by any means equalling her inclination, made her assiduous in trying to recommend herself

to the good graces of others. A happy flexibility of disposition rendered her pretty successful in efforts for this purpose. She possessed the happy art of making people pleased with themselves, was always inclined to render herself useful, and, in short, managed matters so well, that she was seldom obliged to sit down to a solitary dinner. She had early attracted the notice of Mrs. Beaumont; and by degrees a confidential intercourse was established between them, that gave her a perfect insight into the character of the latter.

She now came, brim-full of intelligence, from a house where lady Caroline had also just called. She entered with that self-complacent air that always indicated her having something pleasant to communicate—what this was she did not long conceal. Lady Caroline had positively declared, it was by the express desire of colonel Morven that she had called to invite them to the approaching ball—" So we may easily divine what has occurred,"

she added, with a significant smile and glance at Albina.

"Bless me," said Mrs. Beaumont, perfectly comprehending this glance, and colouring with pleasure, "where can he have seen her? Do you recollect, my dear child," turning to Albina, "having met him any where?"

Albina replied in the negative; at the same time pretending to think the insinuation of Mrs. Owens was only to be laughed at; but that, in spite of her little finesse to conceal it, it afforded her pleasure, her smiles and blushes plainly demonstrated.

If Mrs. Beaumont had previously decided on giving her every advantage of dress, how still more determined was she now on the measure! and to add to her satisfaction, Mr. Beaumont attempted not on this occasion to restrict her, charging her, however, in bespeaking what she wished for Albina, not to forget what was requisite for Fidelia, at the idea of having

seen whom to advantage, his generous heart expanded.

To let her be seen in any manner on this occasion was not, however, the intention of Mrs. Beaumont. She was too lovely to let her bear the idea. With all her partiality for Albina, she feared beside her she might be overlooked by some. But how could she avoid taking her, expressly invited as she had been, and intent as both Mr. Beaumont and Albina were on her going. At last she thought she had hit upon a plan; and accordingly contriving the next morning to get the rest of the family out of the way for some time, she proceeded to tell her, that she hoped what she was going to say to her would not hurt her feelings; but that it was in order to save them in reality from being shocked, that she had decided on speaking to her as she now intended. She then explicitly told her, that, unconnected as she was with any one, or rather suspected to be the offspring of Caty Cavan, she could not ap-

pear in public without exposing herself to a thousand cruel taunts and mortifications. —" But as neither Mr. Beaumont nor Albina," she artfully added, " would hearken to any suggestions of mine on the subject, and, out of mistaken good-nature, insisted on my silence to you on it, I must expect that whatever your determination may be, from what I have said, you do not let it be surmised that it is owing to any thing you have heard from me."

Fidelia solemnly promised observance of this admonition, but not without being cruelly shocked by what she had heard. Was she then regarded in so equivocal a light, that she could not with propriety or regard to her own feelings enter society? But she could not doubt the assertions of Mrs. Beaumont, and consequently decided, from pride and delicacy, on keeping herself retired. But the promise she had made to Mrs. Beaumont placed her in a very awkward predicament; her positive refusal to be one of the party to Rock

Fort, after the pleasure she had previously evinced at the idea, without assigning any reason for this refusal, occasioning not only surprise, but also displeasure in the minds of Mr. Beaumont and Albina.

What she, however, was restricted from giving, an explanation on the subject, Mrs. Beaumont herself thought proper to give. She took an opportunity of telling her husband and Albina, that Fidelia had in confidence imparted to her her unwillingness, upon reflection, to go to Rock Fort, being entirely owing to a fear, from the mystery of her birth, of being exposed to unpleasant slights in company, and which fear had accordingly induced her to decide on never accepting any invitation in which she might be included with them.

Neither could hearken with patience to this resolution, and would immediately have set about arguing her out of it, as one highly ridiculous, but for Mrs. Beaumont's assurance of having given her a solemn promise not to disclose what she had

told her; and that, of course, if informed of her promise being broken, she would never place confidence in her again. In short, her artful manœuvre succeeded; and to the equal disappointment of the young friends, they were compelled to relinquish the pleasure they had looked forward to enjoying together at Rock Fort.

But selfish regrets could not prevent Fidelia from doing every thing in her power to set off Albina to the best advantage this evening; and such was her fond and anxious solicitude about her, as she assisted at her toilet, that Mrs. Beaumont could not help experiencing something like remorse for her deception to her.

Mr. Beaumont was too anxious about the events of this evening, not early to have decided on making one to the Castle, and accordingly Fidelia was left entirely to her own reflections. These were melancholy enough; full of life and spirits, all the natural gaiety and animation of youth, she could not but feel dejected at

the idea of being perhaps compelled to seclude herself from society, through the mystery of her birth. But that this was of the nature alluded to by Mrs. Beaumont, she could not for a moment admit. She loved her nurse sincerely; but still she shrunk from the idea of considering herself her child, aware, if she was, that she must be the child of infamy. She could not recall any thing to her recollection—any hint, any circumstance that could warrant the supposition; but if it was credited by others, of how little consequence its not being so by herself, except as far as her own immediate feelings were concerned?

How to come at the truth she knew not, unable, as she had yet been, notwithstanding her minute and persevering inquiries on the subject in the neighbourhood, to ascertain the part of America to which her nurse had emigrated; she began to fear, however, that let it be disclosed when it would, she should find herself

disappointed in the romantic idea she had sometimes yielded to, of yet finding herself the "hope of some house thought past hope."

Weary of conjectures, she at length strolled out towards the cliffs, whence the moon, rising majestically over the magnificent bay, presented a spectacle of beauty and sublimity that fixed her attention.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Beneath a shade
I sat me down, more heavily oppress'd,
More desolate at heart, than e'er I felt
Before."

From her contemplative attitude she was roused by a low feigned cough behind her, as of some one wishing thus to give her intimation of their approach, in order to prevent her being startled by their sudden

appearance. She immediately turned, and in the tall majestic figure she beheld approaching, fancied she recognized Grandison. His emerging from the deep shadow of the cliffs, along the foot of which he was advancing at the moment, quickly allowed her to see she was not mistaken.

In the surprise and confusion of this unexpected meeting, she made an involuntary movement towards the house, when, starting forward, he caught her hand, and in a tone at once beseeching and reproachful, demanded, was she then going to shun him, after all the anxiety—the impatience he had felt to see her again?—"The alarm, the dread, the disappointment," he added, in still more animated terms, "I experienced this evening, when your friends entered lord Fitzossory's without you, lest any thing unpleasant had happened; for I knew," looking more earnestly in her face, "that you were invited."

"Yes, certainly," Fidelia faintly, and in much confusion, replied; "but——"

"May I then," he rejoined, with earnestness, after waiting a moment to try whether she would proceed, "without being deemed impertinent, entreat to know why you declined the invitation? Yet, after all, lest I should incur, notwithstanding my precautions, the imputation I deprecate, instead of pressing this inquiry, I will remain satisfied with urging you to accompany your friends to Rock Fort the next time they go thither. I am anxious —I am solicitous on the subject, not merely for the sake of seeing and conversing with you, but in order to obtain that introduction to you which I am aware propriety demands, and the want of which alone prevented my sooner seeking the pleasure I now enjoy."

"Agitated and confused, both by his language and his manner, Fidelia had scarcely power to articulate the acknowledgments her heart dictated for his solicitude about her. To leave a gay and brilliant assembly on her account, merely to satisfy his anx-

iety concerning her, oh, what gratitude did this demand! But the promise he required, she would not, could not give; shrinking more than ever, as she now did, from the humiliations it might be a means of subjecting her to, since he now would be a witness to them.

Her refusal, however, was so hesitating as to give him every hope of yet becoming a successful suppliant; and he was beginning to give utterance to the delight imparted by the idea, when the voice of Mrs. Owens was heard from the house, calling upon Fidelia.

By way of being a little good-natured, Mrs. Beaumont had invited her to come and spend the evening with her. Having a pleasanter way of passing the evening than in a *tête-à-tête* with Fidelia, who neither loved scandal nor played piquet, she declined drinking tea with her; but no supper being given where she had spent the early part of the evening, she had now come to take that repast with her, Mrs.

Beaumont having told her she had provided some fine lobsters for it.

Fidelia's companion started on hearing her voice, and instantly telling her he would no longer detain her, resigned the hand he had continued to hold, with a soft pressure of it to his lips, and bidding her farewell, with an injunction to remember, quickly disappeared amongst the cliffs.

Remember! oh, could she ever forget the feelings she experienced at the idea of having inspired an interest in so generous a breast; how soothing, how delightful, to find she had not offended him, as she had often feared, by her abrupt departure from Judy's. Frequently since then had she been disquieted by an apprehension of this—an apprehension aggravated by being unable to reveal it to others; for as in the particulars she gave the Beaumonts, she had either been too agitated, or deemed it unnecessary to mention him, she could not bring herself afterwards to introduce his name, lest her concealment in the first

instance might be considered strange. But urging her, as he had done, to visit at Rock Fort, how could she disappoint him without at length offending him? But perhaps Mrs. Beaumont might be at length inclined to think she might venture into company without incurring the risk of any thing unpleasant.

Her spirits were in too tumultuous a state to allow of her retiring to repose before the return of the party; or rather she was too solicitous to make certain inquiries, to be able to think of doing so.

Occupying one apartment with Albina, she was able to gratify herself by these the moment of her returning.

The ball was every thing that was delightful, Albina said; but in the list of beaux she enumerated, the name of Grandison did not escape her lips; slightly indeed she dwelt on all but colonel Morven —on him she dwelt with all the rapture of admiration and the pleasure of gratified vanity and pride. He had selected her in

the most marked, the most particular manner for several of the dances—sat by her at supper—and paid her altogether the most flattering attentions.

Fidelia was delighted; and from the strong anxiety now to behold the plainly-supposed conquest of her friend, could not help wishing still more earnestly than before, that Mrs. Beaumont might sanction her going to Rock Fort.

In the course of two days, she found they were to dine there; and she accordingly lost no time in sounding Mrs. Beaumont on the subject, hinting the strong anxiety Albina had for her company thither.

"Oh, she doesn't know why it is not proper for her to be gratified," returned Mrs. Beaumont. "However, Miss Hawthorn," she pettishly added, "if you have made up your mind to go, I am sure I shan't prevent you. I hope, however, we shan't hear any murmurs or complaints

about any thing unpleasant you may meet with in consequence."

Fidelia sighed deeply, and gave up the point. No, she would not subject herself to scorn and contempt—she would not run the risk of being lessened in the estimation of Grandison, by exposing herself to humiliations before him. But not without the deepest regret and reluctance did she now see the party depart to Rock Fort without her—now that she knew she should there have seen him—now that she was aware of his expecting her there.

She tried to divert her thoughts from disagreeable contemplations by work—by reading, but nothing would do; and when the duskiness of evening prevented her still trying these resources, she strolled out in her usual direction towards the cliffs.

The moon was again risen over the bay, silvering with inimitable beauty its rocks and cliffs, and restoring to sight many a

rude headland and shaded cave, which the fall of night had partially obscured. The low murmur of the rippling tide below, united to the mildness of the scene around, had a soothing effect upon her mind. Yet still again a thought of Grandison would return, and involuntarily her eyes became directed to the spot where she had seen him a few nights before. She started; for, leaning against the cliff, she thought she saw a figure moving.

For a few minutes she had not power to stir; then determined to ascertain whether or not she was mistaken, she advanced towards it, and shrieked with surprise, when, on drawing close to it, having by that time persuaded herself there was no one there, from no one coming forward to meet her, she saw Grandison attentively observing her.

"I have alarmed you, I fear," he said, as he came forward.

"Alarmed!" she involuntarily repeated.

" Yes, seeing you here was so unexpected."

" Had it been expected, I believe I may conclude that I should not have been favoured with this opportunity of speaking to you. I have reason to imagine so, after your so studiously declining the opportunity I implored you to afford of being properly introduced to you."

" Not studiously," cried Fidelia, hurt, from previous recollections, by the reproachfulness of his present tone.

" Had you not then the power of going to Rock Fort?" he eagerly demanded; then, as if recollecting himself—" Pardon," he added, " the abruptness of this question, nor impute to any idle or unworthy motive any inquiry that may escape me. I have long wished to be considered by you in the light of a privileged acquaintance, and, of course, am naturally anxious to know what prevents my obtaining that pleasure. This day I fully

expected to have done so; it is needless, therefore, to say what my disappointment was when again I saw your friends enter the Castle without you."

Fidelia could not do otherwise than feel gratitude for this strong anxiety. While she was hesitating how to express herself, Grandison, taking her trembling hand, tried to prevail on her to make amends for his recent disappointments, by promising to accompany her friends to a party at Rock Fort, to which they were to be invited the day after the next.

She drew back, however; and on his becoming still more urgent, burst into tears.—"I require no entreaty," she said, "to do what I wish; but circumstances ——" She paused for a minute, then trying to collect herself—"I must presume, sir," she said, "from those under which you met me a short time ago, that you must be aware my situation is not one of entire independence—that——" Again she paused, irresolute and embarrassed

how to proceed; fearful of being explicit, lest of being deemed indiscreet, yet anxious to say something that might convince him of her wish to oblige him.

With the most profound earnestness he listened to her, as if expecting some interesting communication. Finding she did not proceed, after waiting a minute for her to go on, he was on the point of saying something beseechingly to her, when a low rustling was heard, as of some lurking near them. Fidelia instantly snatched away her hand.

"A few words more I implore," he cried.

"No, no; some other time," she said; and evading the attempt he made to detain her, she fled to the house, terrified at the idea of being seen with him, from the silence she had hitherto observed respecting him. She now bitterly regretted that silence, liable as she saw she was to meet him continually; and accordingly, after a little consideration, resolved on mention-

ing him to her friends: but in doing so, must she not be perfectly explicit? and might not the caution she had received concerning him be thought more entitled to attention by them than it had by her, from their not having similar opportunities of observing him?

That very day she had taken out the letter that contained it, and she now put her hand in her pocket to give it another perusal; but it was not there, and after some little search and consideration, it suddenly occurred to her, that when pulling out her handkerchief, whilst speaking to him, she had drawn it out. Exceedingly unwilling it should fall into strange hands, she no sooner thought it probable he was gone, than taking a little servant-girl with her, she proceeded to search for it; but it was not to be found: and all she could hope was, as a means of assuaging the uneasiness excited by the circumstance, that it had been blown into the sea.

Again she sat up for the Beaumonts—

agitation and curiosity were again too strongly excited to permit her, at the usual hour, to think of calm repose.

Albina returned, if possible, more elevated in spirits and expectations than on her preceding visit to lord Fitzossory's—again representing colonel Morven as all that was attentive and interesting.

"And was there no one of the party that could at all come in competition with him?" asked Fidelia, half shunning her eyes, from a consciousness at the moment, by pretending to be busied in undressing herself.

"Oh, not one," Albina replied.

"Come, let me be convinced," said Fidelia; "as I have seen some of the beaux in the neighbourhood, you shall run over the names of those present to-day, that I may know whether your opinion is one I can subscribe to."

"Very well," returned Albina, "I will play the part of Nerissa, animadverting and descanting upon the merits and pre-

tensions of the various beaux, as I call them, over to you. So to begin," and she went through a long list, but again without mentioning the name of Grandison.

Fidelia became more than surprised—a chillness crept through her veins. Good Heavens! had she then been the dupe of a credulous imagination, or had an attempt rather been made to render her so? Had Grandison been present, his name must, she conceived, have been remembered, distinguished as he was for graces and attractions, for manly beauty and unequalled elegance, that rendered it impossible, in her opinion, that he could be overlooked.

Whilst musing on the subject, a sudden exclamation from Albina, on finding something belonging to her in her ridicule, raised her from her reverie.—"Bless me!" Albina cried, "how did this come here?" and she presented to her view the identical letter she had been searching for. She had not taken it from her trunk till

after Albina's departure for Rock Fort, and was therefore positive that it was not through any mistake of hers it had got there. The immediate conclusion was, that Grandison had picked it up, and finding it addressed to her, had taken this method of effecting its restoration. He was then, after all, notwithstanding her recently-suggested doubts on the subject, of the party at Rock Fort; but how strange, with such pretensions to unsolicited notice, that he should have been overlooked!

All seemed mystery, and again she fell into a deep reverie, from which Albina again raised her, by laughingly protesting she believed she was secretly conning over the merits of the different beaux she had mentioned to her, in order to be prepared whom to encourage or discourage, as they were severally introduced to her, which, she trusted, would be the case the day after the next, by her at length accompanying them to Rock Fort, where they were again en-

gaged to spend the day. He was then even no casual visitor or slight acquaintance there; for still he had mentioned the engagements he knew about taking place. But what appeared at present unaccountable, she trusted would soon be explained, again deciding on making another effort to be of the party to the approaching entertainment at Rock Fort.

Whilst at breakfast the next morning, she was surprised by Mr. Beaumont suddenly asking her, with, she conceived, a particular significance of look, whether she had ever been in company with colonel Morven?

She promptly replied in the negative, and the subject instantly dropped.

In the course of the day she decided on commencing the one she had determined on introducing; but something still occurred to prevent her; visitors upon visitors came pouring in.

The appearance of Albina at lord Fitzossory's, an object of particular attention

and admiration to the noble family there, had occasioned a complete revolution in her favour amongst the good folks of D——. Mrs. Dawdle, Mrs. M'Snipwell, and Mrs. Shandy, the high leaders of fashion there, with their respective coteries, all agreed that it would now be the right and proper thing to pay her attention; her being noticed at Rock Fort being a convincing proof that she and her connexions must be somebody. Accordingly, every gig, tilbury, and jaunting car, in their possession, was put in requisition, and away, in gay but scattered procession, they rode, trotted, and gambolled to Cooleamere, according to the various inclinations and abilities of their several horses; where, neither forgetting nor forgiving, Mrs. Beaumont received them with supercilious politeness, enjoying not a little the triumph thus afforded her over them; and to their astonishment (their opinion of their own consequence making them believe that there was no one but what would

be flattered by their notice), distantly hinted, in reply to their pressing invitations to their respective houses, she was more anxious for a select than a numerous acquaintance for her granddaughter; and, indeed, exclusive of her disliking them, she was now extremely indifferent about them, having by this time ascertained that very few of them had greater pretensions to consequence than what they derived from a shewily-furnished house, often too large for their real means, and superabundant entertainments. Gentle lineage was, in her eyes, of considerable consequence; and as few in D—— could now boast of this, she looked upon them, with her high northern notions, as the very trumpery of society.

The next day was that for the party to Rock Fort, and again the anxious Fidelia sounded Mrs. Beaumont on the subject of her going thither, but without receiving the desired encouragement; on the con-

trary, fearful lest her appearing there might in any way be detrimental to Albina, Mrs. Beaumont fairly told her, that with her consent she never should do so.

Nothing, she determined, should tempt her out this evening; after what had twice occurred, to suffer herself to do so would be, she conceived, to appear purposely throwing herself in the way of Grandison, and thus seem tacitly to encourage meetings that had quite too much the air of clandestine ones to seem proper to her. But the restraint she imposed upon herself rendered her restless and unhappy. She was resolute, however, but felt her impatience for the return of Albina heightened to even painfulness, by the hope she entertained of enabling her to solve the mystery relative to Grandison, and ascertain whether there was reason to imagine he had been on the watch for her that evening. But again was she disappointed—the name of Grandison still continued a

stranger to the lips of Albina, and more than ever was Fidelia perplexed and undecided.

But from herself her thoughts were soon abstracted by the information received from Albina — colonel Morven had requested a private audience of her grandfather the ensuing morning, and but to one motive could the request be imputed. —" But I am sure I never dreamt of such a thing—that is," with a blush of pleasure, she added, " so immediately. Oh, Fidelia! when you see him, you will be charmed with him, nor wonder at my quick partiality."

The curiosity of Fidelia, however, was not immediately to be satisfied. — Mrs. Beaumont conceived it but decorous for herself and her granddaughter to be out of the way the next morning when he called, and, of course, Fidelia was confined to the room to which they had retired.

His visit was not long. On his depart-

ing, instead of eagerly, joyfully joining them, as they expected, Mr. Beaumont merely sent a message, desiring his wife and granddaughter to come down to him by themselves.

Fidelia took up a book on their quitting her, but had not been long engaged reading, when she was disturbed by what seemed to her an hysterical sobbing in the room under her. She directly started up, and flying down stairs, attempted to open the door, but it resisted her effort. She was repeating it, when Mr. Beaumont, suddenly opening it, came out, and inquired, in a tone very unusual with him, whether she wanted any thing?

She simply stated what had brought her thither.

"You may return then," he said; "should your services be wanted, you'll be sent for."

Then, without satisfying her solicitude, he went back into the parlour, and closed the door.

Musingly Fidelia reascended the stairs. Never had Mr. Beaumont looked at her, or spoken to her, in such a manner before. Unconscious, however, of aught that could cause him displeasure, she tried to fancy nothing particular was meant either by his look or tone; but her heart was disquieted within her, and after vainly trying to resume her employment, tears began to flow. In the happiest state of dependence, then, there was something unpleasant, some caprice or unkindness to be apprehended.

She was not long suffered to indulge her melancholy reflections; in her turn she was now sent for by Mr. Beaumont. To her surprise, on joining him, she found dinner bringing in, but neither Mrs. Beaument nor Albina present. Alarmed, she eagerly inquired about them?

"They are well," Mr. Beaumont coldly replied, "but gone out to dinner;" motioning her at the same time to take a seat at the table.

She hesitated, however—there was something strange in all this that alarmed her. She turned her eyes upon her companion—he was pale, evidently agitated, and even superciliously distant.—"Pardon me, sir," she said, taking advantage of the servant's being absent at the moment, "but there is something in your look, your manner, that leads me to fear I have offended you. Relieve me from my suspense on the subject, I entreat you; for I cannot think of sitting down to dinner while labouring under it."

"Really! I advise you, however, to take your dinner first, before I give you the explanation you require, lest otherwise your appetite should be destroyed."

Fidelia burst into tears, and retreated towards the door.—"I am not mistaken then," she said, "in imagining I have offended you. You must excuse my now retiring, sir—when you are at leisure to explain how I have, unwittingly, Heaven

knows, incurred your anger, I will gladly return."

"Cold-hearted, deceitful girl!" cried Mr. Beaumont; then bidding the servant, who had just re-entered, be gone, he closed the door, and rudely seizing the hand of Fidelia to draw her from it.—"Is it not a guilty conscience, ever easily alarmed, more than my looks, that tells you I am offended?"

Fidelia stared wildly, but without replying.

"You affect surprise," he added; "therefore I may expect denial; but it will not avail—there are proofs positive—incontrovertible, of your duplicity. This roof no longer affords you a shelter. Could I regret an act dictated by benevolence, I should regret that it ever had. Mrs. Beaumont and your abused friend have quitted it, not to return till your departure; you leave it therefore to-morrow; but on account of your youth, I shall take care, out of Christian charity, to have you safely

conveyed back to those from whose protection you fled, I must now believe unnecessarily, to mine. A married couple, humble neighbours of mine, are on the point of setting off for Cork, to take leave of a relation about sailing thence for England, and this opportunity I shall embrace to get you conveyed thither."

And here it is necessary to mention, that the Bryerlys, fearful of being subjected to disagreeable animadversions for their conduct to Fidelia, immediately after receiving an expostulatory letter on the subject from Mr. Beaumont, thought proper suddenly to quit Strandstown, for the purpose, they said, of returning to England, but not without trying to vindicate their conduct towards her, in the answer they deemed it requisite to give to this letter.

"Arrange as you will my departure, sir," said Fidelia; "I desire—I wish not to intrude on your kindness; but how I have lost it, I must implore to learn. Oh! do

not, I entreat, in mercy, in compassion, persevere any longer in these dark, these mysterious hints, but tell me plainly how I have offended!"

"You are totally unconscious then—you pretend to deny that you have any knowledge of colonel Morven—that you were carrying on a secret intercourse with him, while the mockery of his attentions was offered to your abused friend! But I will not explain further—I will not, by entering into particulars, allow you to imagine I think you ignorant of the cause of my resentment, and thus permit you to believe that you may deceive me into a conviction of your innocence by artful protestations. I will hearken to no assertion, no vindication, when there is a positive proof of guilt; it intimates a wish to be imposed on to enter into arguments on the subject."

"And is it possible, sir, you can be so decided in condemning me as not to listen to my justification? You may refuse to

do so; but I must nevertheless solemnly protest that never, either towards you or any other person, have I acted unworthily —that colonel Morven I never consciously saw, and that whoever has imposed upon you the belief of my having acted as you accuse me, has done so from the cruellest motive. I repeat I do not seek to be a longer burthen on your humanity—but, oh sir!" bursting into tears, "let not, I implore you, the sorrow of my forlorn situation be aggravated, by having to think I have lost the regard of the only friends I had in the world."

"You have heard my resolve," said Mr. Beaumont, unmoved by her tears; "had the wound inflicted by your perfidy been only to my own bosom, I might have pardoned you; but you have wounded me where I was most vulnerable—in the peace and happiness of my child. Her injuries render me inexorable to your entreaties. Lose no time, therefore, in preparing for your departure; every thing requisite will

be provided for you on the road, and before you sail you will receive a small sum of money for any further incidental expences."

Then telling her she might either take her dinner where she now was, or, if she pleased, have it in her chamber, he seated himself at the table.

Dinner!—how little could the agitated, the bewildered, and cruelly-treated girl think of any thing but the agonizing predicament in which she found herself! A mind of the least pride or integrity may easily conceive what she felt, at the idea of being so falsely, so harshly accused—accused of what rendered her almost abhorrent in her own eyes to be suspected of.

The first burst of grief and indignation over, she would have entered upon a written vindication of herself, but that she was persuaded that nothing of the kind would at present be attended to. She therefore, after some consideration, resolved on deferring this attempt till it might be

concluded the present violent irritation against her had, in some degree, subsided; she then decided on making an appeal to the natural integrity of Mr. Beaumont, and by representing to him the injury he did her in condemning her unheard, haply induce him to do her that justice he now denied her. Who, or for what purpose, she had been maligned to him, she could not imagine. If the obscurity of her situation was such as to keep her out of the way of being an object of flattering attention, she also hoped it was such as would have prevented her being one of envy and malice.

But if a faint hope of truth and innocence yet triumphing over defaming falsehood and malice reanimated a little her dejected spirit, how did it again sink within her at the thought of being again subjected to the tyrannical sway, the cruel tauntings of the Bryerlys! But must she be exposed to these? She could not attempt to dispute the plan settled for her by Mr. Beau-

mont; but again in London, could she not endeavour to make exertions for herself—to turn to some account the abilities and education she was grateful to Providence for having received.

Floating on the tide of prosperity, we seldom know what we are capable of, because energy or exertion is not then requisite; but in the rude and tempestuous sea of adversity the case is quite the reverse. Young as she was, circumstances had occurred that had compelled her to fathom her own mind, and she did believe she found an energy and strength within it, that would permit her to profit by any opportunity that might occur for leading her towards independence. On seeking this, therefore, she decided, as soon as she had the power, with a humble hope, yet at the same time firm belief, that by perseveringly doing her own part, and still relying upon Heaven, she should be secure of its divine protection through all the mazy paths of life, and aid and

assistance in encountering the trials and difficulties incident to her forlorn situation.

Having recovered some little degree of composure by her arguments with herself, she began to prepare for her departure. In collecting the few articles belonging to her, she recollected some unfinished work she had left in the room where colonel Morven was received in the morning, and accordingly repaired thither for it. On entering she was surprised to find several sheets of written paper scattered about it. Mechanically almost she picked them up, and seeing them paged, was almost as mechanically sorting them, when Mr. Beaumont suddenly entered, and with fury flashing from his eyes, tore them from her. —"What!" he demanded, "is this the way you are preparing for your journey—trying to pry into family secrets?"

Fidelia attempted to vindicate herself, but he would not hearken to her.

"Begone, girl!" he cried; "begone!"

with increasing passion; "your sight is hateful to me, from the meanness as well as perfidy I now see you capable of; and when once assured of your safe arrival at your destination, I trust 'tis the last time I shall ever hear any thing of the (I now believe) spurious offspring of Mrs. Caty Cavan."

With a feeling of terror she had never before experienced, Fidelia withdrew.—"Good God! of what injustice does infuriate passion render us guilty!" She hastily finished her packing, and at the first glimpse of day, started from the bed, on which she had merely thrown herself to watch for the arrival of the vehicle that was to convey her from a house she had now a dread of being in.

She was not long kept waiting—Murtogh and his wife soon appeared with their car, and hastily joining them, she bid a silent and sorrowful adieu to the spot she considered her native one. Some time elapsed ere she could in any degree shake

off the benumbing dejection that had seized her. At length, fearing she might affront her companions if she remained inflexibly silent, she forced herself to answer now and then the remarks they made respecting their journey.

Her attention was at length attracted by a man on horseback following the car at a distance. His figure resembled Peckham's; but a large flapped hat and high collar drawn up so entirely concealed his face, that it was impossible for her to ascertain whether or not it was he. Her heart palpitated from the uncertainty, but she strove to compose herself, by thinking that even if it was, she need not now fear any annoyance. Still, however, her eyes were rivetted on him till they reached the place where they were to breakfast.

Tea and eggs were Mrs. Murtogh's order; and while she and Fidelia went into an inner room to take their repast, Murtogh staid without in the kitchen, to partake of a coarser and more substantial one.

While Mrs. Murtogh was making tea, Fidelia went to the window, and happening to lean against it for a minute, saw Murtogh hastily coming out of the house, followed by the man already alluded to, and whose hat being now a little raised, discovered to her the features of Peckham. They were in earnest discourse, and walked away in a contrary direction to the window, evidently, it seemed to her, in order to avoid being overheard or interrupted.

Again she became startled, but again tried to collect herself, by reflecting she had nothing now to dread from Peckham, since no longer in the power of those who were ready to second his views and wishes. After all, too, their conversation might not be about her; and even if it were, it might be solely owing to curiosity on the part of Peckham. She hesitated for a little, whether she should mention her recognition of him, and at length decided to say nothing of him, except he was mentioned to her.

This was not the case; the journey was resumed without seeing him again, or hearing any thing about him. They stopped again in the course of the day two or three times for refreshment, and towards night reached the place where they were to sleep.

In the morning, previously to her noticing Peckham, she had been told that the place where they were to bait for the night was a very considerable village; she was therefore surprised when, on stopping at it, she found it was a lone house. With some anxiety she inquired the reason of this—an anxiety heightened by recollecting that more than once she had thought Murtogh deviated from the usual track. They quieted her, however, by their readily answering that it was because they feared, upon second thoughts, the horse would not be able to go much farther that night, as must be the case if they persevered in their original intention.

The supper Fidelia chose to have was

soon over, and immediately after she withdrew to rest. Disturbed as was her mind, she was yet too much overpowered by agitation and fatigue not to be soon asleep.

From deep repose she was startled by some undefined kind of noise. How long she had slept she knew not, but mistaking bright moonlight for daylight, she concluded some time; and immediately upon this, making up her mind that the noise she had heard was Mrs. Murtogh knocking at her door to wake her, she directly got up, and having dressed herself, sallied forth to join her fellow-travellers. The miserable little room she occupied was divided from the sitting one by a long clay passage, infinitely better ventilated than even count Rumford would have advised. As she was advancing through this, she was confirmed in the supposition that had made her rise, by plainly distinguishing the voices of Murtogh and his wife, and accordingly was fearlessly proceeding, when

the nasal tones of Peckham suddenly struck her ear.

She started, and involuntarily recoiled; then again, almost mechanically, went on, impelled by a resistless wish to know what they were about. A friendly chink in the door at the extremity of the passage allowed her to see perfectly into the room it opened into. The party there consisted of her fellow-travellers, Peckham, a ruffianly-looking man habited as a priest, and the woman of the house, compared with whom even the repulsive Judy was amiable in feature. Far from there being any appearance of preparation for setting out, they were all seated in deep conversation, round a table strewed over with mugs, bottles, and pipes. She did not long remain a stranger to the subject they were conversing on—a few minutes sufficed to let her ascertain that a plot was formed against her—that the priest she saw was brought there for the purpose of making

her Peckham's—and that they were then thinking of calling her up, in order to drag her out to her intended fate.

For an instant her heart fainted within her, then recollecting that nothing but the promptest exertion could probably save her from destruction, she strove to rally her spirits, and softly stepping back to her chamber, secured the door as well as she could; and then forcing open a small window, which she had noticed the preceding night, looking over an open tract of country, she made her way through it, nor paused till she had got to some distance. Then stopping to see which way she should go, she beheld open fields before her at one side, and on the other a mountain stream, with woods rising beyond it.

Hither she bent her steps, as here, she thought, she should be likely to obtain shelter, which, owing to the light, was absolutely essential. She had not wandered many paces along the bank, when

she perceived some stepping-stones; she took advantage of them to cross immediately to the other side, and plunging amidst the deepest of the shades, hurried on, in spite of briars, brambles, and innumerable other impediments, till she had got, as she conceived, to some distance from the scene of danger.

By this time she had discovered her mistake respecting the light, and accordingly knowing it would be useless at present to seek the shelter of a dwelling, she began to look about her for some spot in which she might rest till daylight. In looking about for this she suddenly espied a low building amidst the trees. It was of singular construction; and after a momentary contemplation, led to believe it one of those ornamental buildings that are often scattered through domains, she ventured to it, and softly unlatching the arched door, found herself within a rustic hut, thickly lined with moss, and furnished with matted benches.

Here then she resolved on passing the time that must intervene till she could obtain shelter elsewhere. Accordingly she tried to secure the door, but there was no bolt. She tried to hope and believe, however, that to this sequestered spot she should not be pursued. A slight shower soon after came on; and as the rain beat against the little casements of the hut, and the wind howled through the trees, she trembled with apprehension, from mistaking its sound, more than once, for that of pursuit.

Night however wore away without any real cause for terror, and at length she heard the first twitter of the birds announcing the hour she was so impatien- for, with a transport of joy and gratitude, that made her sink upon her knees, to return thanks to Heaven for her escape from the snare that had been spread for her. Her plan was to seek for shelter in the nearest village, and thence write to Mr. Beaumont, to acquaint him with what had

happened, and implore protection from him till she had quitted the kingdom.

After sitting quiet a little time longer, she began to think she might then venture out with safety, and accordingly set about re-adjusting her appearance, which the flight of the night had a good deal discomposed. She had just taken off her bonnet and pelisse for the purpose, when she heard steps approaching the hut. Instinctively she sprung to the door, and placed herself against it to prevent its being opened; but the surprise occasioned by its resistance rendered abortive her attempt to keep it closed. It was pushed with a violence that drove her from it, and a lady, past the period of youth, in deep mourning, entered.

If embarrassment was great on one side, equally so was surprise on the other, the appearance of Fidelia altogether being such as to excite astonishment, how she could possibly have come into such a situation as her torn garments, her dishe-

velled hair, and hands lacerated by the breaks through which she had been compelled to force her way, implied.

"Good Heavens!" the lady exclaimed, after the silence of a minute, "what has happened?"

Fidelia clasped her hands—"Oh, madam!" she cried, deep blushes suffusing the cheek which terror and fatigue had previously rendered pale, "I wonder not at the surprise you manifest; yet scarcely do I know how to account for what has excited it, so improbable perhaps may seem my relation. Good God!" she exclaimed, in an agony of tears, "how am I distressed and confused!"

"Compose yourself," said the lady, "and whatever it may be, relate the truth; perhaps I may have the power of serving you, and if I have reason to think you candid, I shall be happy to exert it."

Thus encouraged, Fidelia tried to collect herself, and briefly related the occurrence that had thrown her into the embarrass-

ment and predicament in which she now found herself.

The lady heard her with deep attention. When she had concluded, she told her she should accompany her to her mansion, and remain under her protection till she had apprised her friends of what had happened, and measures were taken for ensuring her safety the remainder of her journey, giving her then to understand that she was the countess of Castle Dermot, and the place where they were her seat.

The gratitude of Fidelia was inexpressible; but such was its effect on her feelings, that some time elapsed ere she was sufficiently recovered from an hysterical burst of joy to be able to attend her new protectress.

At length they issued from the hut, and after a short walk through aromatic plants and stately trees, Fidelia found herself in the magnificent mansion of her ladyship, bearing just sufficient traces of antiquity

to render its magnitude more impressive, and on every side surrounded with romantic scenery.

The housekeeper was immediately summoned, and a sufficient explanation being given to satisfy the curiosity of the good woman, Fidelia declining the proposal of retiring to rest, was enabled to change her dress, and then sat down to breakfast with the countess.

Her ladyship was kind and soothing, and as much as possible Fidelia strove to evince her sense of this, but was scarcely able at times to make any exertion for the purpose, from the bewildering effect of recent events upon her mind.

But though ill equal to the effort, breakfast was no sooner over than she would have commenced her intended letter to Mr. Beaumont, but was prevented by the desire expressed by the countess for a more particular account of herself than she had yet given, having as yet only explained to her ladyship the treachery that

had been the means of introducing her to her knowledge.

Convinced that she had another motive than mere curiosity for this desire, Fidelia unhesitatingly complied with it, suppressing nothing in her unvarnished tale but the mention of colonel Grandison, as unnecessary to the elucidation of any particulars she gave.

Lady Castle Dermot appeared highly interested by her story; as a proof of which, when concluded, she informed her, that should she find it correct, she would willingly afford her the protection she so much required, adding, that in order to ascertain the fact, it was her intention to accompany the letter she was about sending to her late protector with one from herself, requesting him to satisfy her on the subject.

Fidelia was all gratitude at this declaration; yet was the joy it afforded her damped by apprehension, when she thought of the manner in which she had parted

from Mr. Beaumont. She almost feared the benevolent intentions of her ladyship towards her might be prevented; but no—he could not be so cruel; he could not wish to have the creature he knew from childhood, from infancy, turned out a wild wanderer on the face of the earth.

Till the satisfaction she deemed requisite was obtained, lady Castle Dermot decided on keeping Fidelia at a distance; but she could not look at her—she could not hear her speak without forgetting this resolution; so that from the strengthening interest she felt for her, Fidelia herself was scarcely more anxious for a favourable answer from Mr. Beaumont than was her ladyship herself, in order to have a pretext for retaining her with her.

Lady Castle Dermot was a proof that the means of happiness, without certain feelings and dispositions, will not afford it. Naturally of a turn to delight in indulgence, and render it necessary in a degree, and early accustomed to find herself

regarded as a primary object, she gradually conceived a dislike to all society but that in which she was sure of meeting with all that attention and tenderness so essential to her.

Ignorant of her motive for this dislike —flattered and delighted by what he conceived, in an age so dissipated, her extraordinary preference of the domestic circle, the attachment of her lord gradually became almost idolatry, till at length his tenderness formed a paradise around her, that rendered her forgetful almost of all but him who constituted it. The slightest intrusion on her domestic bliss was insupportable to her; and in order to prevent it, gradually estranging herself from friends and connexions, when at length her lord was unexpectedly snatched from her, she found herself almost an isolated being.

How bitterly now, from her consequent feeling of forlornness, did she regret the indulgence she had given to her selfish propensities—to those feelings that had made her

shun and disregard all whose attentions she had not immediately required! but the exertions that might in a degree have remedied the evil she could not force herself to make. She still shrunk back from mixing where she could not expect to be an object of the first regard—where such doting tenderness as she had long been accustomed to she should see lavished on others than herself—where the wants, the wishes that had been ever fondly anticipated, might now be expressed with very little effect; in short, to satisfy her sickly sensibility, she felt that it would be requisite again to have some being exclusively devoted to her. But where was this being to be found? Even her son she could not flatter herself would make her his first consideration; indeed she had seldom derived pleasure from thinking of him, in anticipating the possibility or rather probability of his being estranged from her by new ties and new connexions. She had early

ceased to derive happiness from his idea; in short, she proved, that where self is permitted to be the centre of every wish and thought, it is impossible to be happy. That in a life so liable to chances and changes, it is absolutely requisite to our felicity to cultivate a general feeling of kindness, since those who can identify themselves even in a degree with others—who allow their affections to expand beyond their own immediate circle—the little world of their own creating, can never feel themselves entirely forlorn or destitute of comfort.

Yielding to her sickly feelings, instead of courting an illustrious alliance for her son, a thousand times she wished she could find for him some isolated being, who, destitute of rivalling connexions, she might thus be able to attach to herself, and thus secure to herself the consolation of thinking there was one who would not suffer her to be neglected in sickness, nor unmourned

in death; for not without shuddering could she think of either; but as some excuse for the latter, who, as the poet says—

"To dumb forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing anxious being ere resign'd,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful clay,
Nor cast one longing, lingering look behind?

"On some fond breast the parting soul relies;
Some pious drops the closing eye requires:
Ev'n from the tomb the voice of nature cries—
Ev'n in our ashes live their wonted fires."

Romantic thought! but if Fidelia proved to be what she represented herself, what delight should she have in calling her daughter! Here would be a connexion that could excite no apprehension of her son being estranged from her—here was a creature so peculiarly situate as to have no nearer friend than herself to look up to, and whom, of course, it was natural to suppose she should always have ready to administer to her comforts.

From the vague idea she began to encourage, she became more impatient than

ever for the expected answer to her letter concerning her; but the time for it arrived without bringing it, and in consequence she dispatched a courier with another to inquire the reason. He returned with information of the absence of Mr. Beaumont with his family, at present, from home. His silence thus in her opinion satisfactorily accounted for, she became still more kind, still more condescending to Fidelia, till at length all further reserve was at an end, and she permitted her to be her constant companion.

Led, from this conduct, to believe herself permanently established with her ladyship, the long-agitated mind of Fidelia regained composure; and as reeking anxiety subsided, she was enabled to exert those abilities that rendered her so desirable for a companion.

One thing still at times agitated her a little; that was her dread of lord Castle Dermot's making his appearance, from her discovery of his being lord Killeny. She

strove, however, to calm her perturbation, by a hope that if he did come to Woodlands, the protection he found her under would prevent any impropriety in his conduct, and in the interim decided on remaining silent with regard to her knowledge of him.

Though residing in a populous neighbourhood, her ladyship lived retired; she cultivated the acquaintance of but few, and to those few introduced Fidelia, in a manner calculated, she conceived, to preclude any further inquiries concerning her.

A few select guests were expected one evening; while waiting their arrival, Fidelia, at the desire of lady Castle Dermot, sat down to the harp. The strain she chose was mournful and low; while sounds, soft as a chanted requiem from a cloistered votaress, were stealing from her lips, a slight movement at the door drew her attention, and she beheld colonel Grandison standing at it.

His regiment was now stationed at the

depôt in the neighbouring town, where he had scarcely arrived ere he came to pay his respects to lady Castle Dermot, by whom, as well as her late lord, he was held in such estimation as to render them particularly anxious to have their son under his command.

At an apparition, as almost it might be called, so unexpected, Fidelia started up; and scarcely conscious of what she was about, was retreating into an adjoining room, when, springing forward, Grandison caught her hand, and with something like a reproachful exclamation for her attempting to fly him, expressed his surprise and pleasure at beholding her where he did; then suddenly recollecting himself, turned to address lady Castle Dermot.

Her ladyship, however, scarcely noticed his inquiries after her health, so impatient was she to know when and how he and Fidelia had become acquainted.—"Pray may I ask?" she said.

Grandison looked at Fidelia.

Blushing deeply, and involuntarily bending her eyes to the ground, Fidelia replied —" At Hastings."

" Hastings !" repeated the countess. " Why then you saw my son also, lord Killeny ?"

Fidelia acknowledged she had.

" I wonder you didn't tell me so," she said, with something like a feeling of dissatisfaction.

Fidelia excused herself, or rather tried to do so, by saying she did not know that his lordship would recollect her, and therefore did not think that it was necessary.

Still, however, she was not satisfied. Had he awakened any interest in her feelings, she could not have forborne, she thought, to mention him; then her evident emotion at the sight of colonel Grandison —his pleasure too at beholding her; in short, she felt disturbed; the predominant feeling of her nature rendered her jealous and unhappy at the thought of the being

she wanted to have devoted entirely to herself, having a preferable regard for any other person.

The arrival of her guests forced her to collect herself, and compelled out of complaisance to sit down to cards, Grandison availed himself of her attention being in a degree withdrawn from them, to renew his strong expressions of pleasure at this unexpected meeting, with Fidelia, and express how much he had felt from his vain search and inquiries after her on missing her from Cooleamere.

How flattering to Fidelia to learn that she had been an object of such solicitude to him! her cheeks glowed at the idea, and never before had a sensation of such exquisite pleasure been experienced by her. Confused, however, by his particularity, she wished to prevent its continuance: her efforts in a degree were successful, Grandison himself, from time to time, observing the looks of lady Castle Dermot, not merely with earnestness, but a look

of louring displeasure, directed towards them; yet, as he gazed upon Fidelia, with difficulty could he suppress his feelings, so exquisitely lovely did the bright glow of her cheek make her appear.—"Do you recollect," he asked in a half-whisper, as she was busied making tea, "the first expression of Henry the Eighth to Anne Boleyn in the banquet scene at Wolsey's, as described by Shakespeare? How appriate would it now be!"

"No—the tyrant," replied Fidelia; but not without a deepening blush that spoke her perfect recollection of the expressions thus alluded to; "I hate him so much, that I would not strive to recollect any expression of his."

"Beauty, till now I never saw thee,' was it not?" asked Miss Otwell, the little simpering daughter of a lady of the party, and who sat at the other side of Fidelia at the tea-table.

"Exactly," turning his dark, full, ex-

pressive eyes upon Fidelia, as he answered, with insidious softness.

Again Fidelia made an effort to check any particularity, and the subjects started for the purpose had at length the desired effect.

Delighted by their unexpected meeting, Grandison was all himself this evening, and with all his wonted taste and admiration, discussed the favourite topics of the day; while his fair auditor, seen in a new light, freed from those embarrassments that had hitherto impeded any regular conversation, proved she had other claims to admiration than what youth and beauty give. How delightful to find her mind so cultivated! how doubly anxious did it render him to establish the fact of her being the person he supposed!

But not long uninterruptedly would the countess permit them to converse. After some time viewing them askance, with something of petulance, she protested she would no longer allow the excuse

pleaded by Grandison for not sitting down to cards, namely, his being in a hurry back to quarters, as it was now evident that was not the case.

Colouring and laughing—" Can you wonder that I should forget it ?" he said ; " but, since reminded of it, to vindicate my veracity, I must retire."

The evening was delightfully fine, and he ventured to propose that the two young ladies, Fidelia and Miss Otwell, attended by a servant to escort them back, should accompany him part of the way he had to proceed through the park. Neither evinced any disinclination to the proposal, and Fidelia was quitting the room to get her bonnet, when the countess, in a manner that made her colour with confusion, told her that she did not choose she should go out that evening, as she wanted her, as soon as cards were over, to resume her seat at the harp.

Looking the disappointment he felt, Grandison, with a half-sigh, took his leave;

while Fidelia, with a starting tear at the proof thus afforded of her being still at the mercy of others, turned mechanically to a window.

To conciliate and attach her was the object of the countess. No sooner, therefore, were her visitors gone, whose society she quickly ceased to enjoy, from the manner in which she had been disconcerted by the incidents of the evening, than she exerted herself to dissipate the cloud which the abrupt and pettish way in which she had checked her going out had caused to gather upon the brow of Fidelia; but her efforts to recompose her were rendered abortive by the minuteness with which she interrogated her concerning the progress and length of her acquaintance with Grandison, and the kind of angry and jealous surprise she continued to manifest at her never having mentioned her son.

The subject was renewed in the morning, and gradually she slid from it into a long dissertation on the unhappiness often

occasioned by permitting the affections to be early engaged, and the wisdom of preferring friendship to love, except in certain circumstances.

Fidelia would have been surprised by her discourse, but that she imputed it to a suddenly-excited suspicion of her entertaining a preferable regard for colonel Grandison—a conjecture, that whilst it agitated and confused her, decided her on endeavouring henceforth to keep a strict watch over her feelings; and to this she was also incited by the consideration of the little probability there was, from the difference of their situations, of his ever thinking seriously of her, and that therefore it behoved her, as she valued her happiness, and perhaps fame, to be vigilant and circumspect in her conduct. Yet, notwithstanding her consequent resolution to avoid him as much as possible, she could not help feeling both mortified and dejected, when, on his calling in the course of the morning, the countess, telling her

not to disturb herself from her work, said she would go down to receive him by herself. To this, however, she was instigated, not merely by the jealousy she entertained of the attachment she suspected between them, but her wish for a private opportunity of questioning Grandison concerning Fidelia.

His answers to her queries so confirmed the statement received from her as almost to decide the countess on yielding to her wishes concerning her; yet so convinced, so aware was she of the project she suffered herself to dwell on being one that could not fail of being censured and ridiculed —of exposing her to "the world's dread laugh, which scarce the stern philosopher can bear," that carefully she guarded against any expression that could convey a suspicion of it.

What indeed could be more extravagant than the idea of not merely suffering, but absolutely wishing for an alliance between her son, the ennobled heir of vast estates,

and a being not merely portionless and friendless, but whose origin was unknown; yet such was now her ardent wish, owing to the very circumstances that would have checked it in another mind, namely, Fidelia's being totally destitute and unconnected.

Had colonel Grandison been as explicit as he might, this wish would have received a sanction that would probably have prevented her any longer deeming it expedient to keep it concealed. A tale was in his power to unfold, that would at once have confirmed and strengthened the interest experienced for Fidelia—a tale that would have divested of all appearance of romantic extravagance any thing she could do for her.

Struck—affected beyond description at finding Fidelia under her protection—almost led, from the regard she manifested for her, to believe in the instinctive impulses of nature, nearly was he tempted to disclose the circumstances above alluded

to; but while a doubt remained as to facts absolutely essential to substantiate it, he deemed it advisable, for the sake of the countess herself, to remain entirely silent on the subject, aware of the poignancy with which a mind like hers would feel the disappointment of any pleasing hopes, such as, notwithstanding his expectations to the contrary, she might be destined to experience.

To ascertain this—to learn whether the persuasion that had early inspired such an interest for Fidelia—an interest independent of that her youth, her innocence, her beauty, were so peculiarly calculated to create, he was now employing every means in his power. He had discovered where her nurse was to be applied to, and had written to her, requiring an answer to the inquiries suggested, and holding out the strongest inducements for the disclosure of the truth.

Till the expected answer arrived, it was his resolve to avoid her as much as pos-

sible, aware, that should it be adverse to his wishes, to think seriously of her would be madness; but this resolution, so wise and proper, was only adhered to when there was no temptation to break it—when he knew he could see her. To resist seeking to do so was beyond his power, and thus, notwithstanding the jealous vigilance of the countess, who watched over her, he found continual opportunities for meeting and conversing with her.

It was now, to use poetical language, the very pride and manhood of the year, when the apple, reddening 'midst its paly green, the moist pear bending the leafy spray, the ripening grain, and still more varied foliage, all proclaim the approach of that glad season that gives to the husbandman the fruition of his hopes and labours. Lady Castle Dermot could not therefore be always contriving pretexts for keeping Fidelia within, except when she chose to go out herself, which, except in a carriage, was very seldom the case; and in explain-

ing the diversified scenery of the park, in seeking new sketches for her pencil, Fidelia was sure of always encountering Grandison — sometimes with his fishing-rod, sometimes his dogs; in short, always in such a way as to make it appear as if it was owing to chance, not premeditation on his part; and thus was she prevented the agitation and embarrassment she must otherwise have experienced from the circumstance.

CHAPTER IX.

"Then let us teach our trial patience,
Because it is a customary cross,
As due to love as thoughts, and dreams, and sighs,
Wishes and tears, poor fancy's followers."

But not quite as unsuspicious as her *protégée* was the countess: to design, she was convinced, these meetings were owing; and the motive to which she, of course, imputed them, alarmed and pained her greatly: but not entirely to selfish motives was owing her uneasiness and anxiety on the subject. She felt sincerely interested for Grandison: to know him intimately, as she did, and not be so, would indeed have been impossible; and aware of his grandfather's feelings and hers being in direct opposition on matters of ambition, she determined on taking him to task with regard to Fidelia, convinced

that if he suffered himself to be entangled in an attachment for her, it must, in some way or other, be the means of occasioning him unhappiness, if not ruin.

She was not long in finding the opportunity she sought; and addressed with a solicitude so truly maternal as deeply to affect him, recalled to recollection by her admonitions, he acknowledged the propriety of what she said, and promised henceforward to shun what he had hitherto so sedulously sought, aware of the cruelty there was, both to himself and the innocent object of his attachment, in doing ought that had a tendency to strengthen this, uncertain as were his hopes with regard to her.

Yet must he give up the delight of conversing with her—of watching those fugitive blushes indicative to his fond fancy of delightful emotions—of listening to remarks at once lively and innocent? Oh, even to look into her dark eyes was happiness! but he knew—he felt the necessity

of the measure, and resolved to be steady to his promise. He was at liberty to quit the depôt for a time, if he chose, and accordingly decided on not delaying to avail himself of it.

He had no sooner notified this determination to the countess, than (lord Castle Dermot still lingering at Rock Fort) she earnestly entreated he would express to him the surprise she felt at not seeing him before at Woodlands—"Should he still hesitate to attend to my wishes, you must force him thence," she angrily said; "you have the power to do so by commanding him to the depôt."

"True; but it was a power Grandison resolved not to avail himself of. What! be the means of throwing Fidelia in the way of the licentious pursuit of the dissipated Castle Dermot again? No; nothing could induce him, and though ignorant of what had occurred, still he wondered her ladyship could be so imprudent, so indiscreet, as to desire his coming, while an object so

dangerous, so attractive, was under her care. Almost was he tempted to rebuke her with sternness for such a want of thought; but he would not be accessary to any mischief, and accordingly determined on doing all in his power to detain her son at the Castle.

Having fixed on quitting the depôt, he decided on departing that evening; but how could he depart without seeing Fidelia—without bidding her adieu—without announcing himself his intended departure, in order, perhaps, to see its effect upon her? By chance, in approaching the house, he had heard where she was, and no sooner took leave of lady Castle Dermot, than resigning his horse to his groom, he turned towards the place where he expected to find her.

This was at the ruins of a once-stately abbey, in a retired and very romantic part of the park, still so impressive and picturesque as to attract many a visitor of taste and feeling. Fidelia had commenced

a sketch of the interior, and seated at her task, Grandison surprised her. But her hand had paused at the moment, as she sat upon a tombstone and surveyed the ponderous arches, that in fine perspective had once appeared gradually receding from the eye, but now overrun with grass and weeds, filled up with crumbling heaps the remoter views, she involuntarily thought of the changes and chances of this mortal life.

The cruel reverses, the direful revolutions to which families as well as states are subject, the unhappy condition of those who, born to flattering prospects, find themselves suddenly despoiled of all, and with all those elegant desires, those noble aspirings, that pride and sensitive delicacy which independence nourishes, compelled to bear the slights and scorn of the illiberal and upstart. How true, she also thought, that man by his conduct aggravates the ills of life to man, that through it it is that the arrows of fate often become so barbed and empoisoned!

The stealing approach of Grandison roused her from her reverie, and with a palpitation at her heart that announced the intruder, she turned to receive him.

Some minutes elapsed ere he had courage to utter that cruel word *farewell!*—minutes pretended to be employed in examining her sketch, but in reality in gazing on the countenance of the lovely artist. Suddenly observing the intentness of his gaze, Fidelia, colouring and confused, began to collect her pencils, saying she felt disinclined to pursue her task any longer that day.

"But ere you go hence, let me accomplish my painful task," said Grandison, opposing her departure—"one that you will not be sorry perhaps that I am compelled to." He then mentioned his intended departure.

Fidelia felt a chill through her feelings, but striving to rally her spirits—"You scarcely merit, after what you have said," she cried, "that I should say I am sorry.

Why should you suppose that I would be glad of the departure of a person to—to —to whom I feel myself indebted for many kind attentions?"

"Oh, assure me of this!" forcibly detaining her struggling hand, and pursuing her averted eye—"assure me that you indeed feel regret for my going, that I may depart with a lightened heart."

"What, to render your heart light, is it requisite that you should be assured those of your friends are heavy? That is rather strange, I think."

"Oh no! for to be assured that you feel sorrow for my departure, would be to inspire a hope of not being immediately forgotten, and to be allowed to indulge the idea of living in your remembrance, need I say the happiness it would afford?"

Living in her remembrance! what did this expression mean? Did it not imply a long, a last farewell? Was their acquaintance then to be so suddenly terminated—the soothing pleasure she had en-

joyed in his converse and grateful attentions relinquished for ever? Forgotten by her! No—the probability was, that it was she would be forgotten by him—that the various pursuits in which he was engaged would quickly obliterate her idea from his recollection.

"Will you not give me the assurance I require?" he said—"will you not tell me that happiness itself shall not quite banish me from your thoughts?"

Fidelia burst into tears—"Oh, do not fear," she said, "that my being too happy will make me forget you—forget any one entitled to my esteem! As the friend of my friend, and a person to whom I am obliged for many proofs of politeness and attention, colonel Grandison will be remembered by me."

To give further utterance to what he felt the impassioned Grandison did not dare; but to his throbbing heart he pressed the hand which he had detained, while his eyes sought those lovely ones in which all

that he could picture to himself of beauty and of feeling was expressed. Oh, how did he wish that he could have ventured to wipe away the tears that now suffused them!—to dry with the ardent kiss of love the soft cheek on which they hung trembling!

At this instant a deep, a heart-breathed sigh was heard; both started, and looked eagerly towards the spot whence it proceeded.

"Who can it be?" exclaimed Fidelia.

"I don't know," answered her companion, but evidently confused from an apprehension of its being lady Castle Dermot, who, in consequence of what she had witnessed, might not only think him deserving of reproach, but might try to injure him with Fidelia.

"Shall I try?" he at length added, after a pause, and as he spoke, he moved towards the spot.

Just as he reached it, some one was heard rushing out; but though he darted

forward, the quantity of clustering bushes that grew in this direction, intermingled with fragments of the ruin, totally precluded his discovering who it was.

"How strange!" said Fidelia.

"Oh, not so very strange, perhaps," he replied, seized with a sudden pang of jealousy: "some admirer, perhaps, of Miss Hawthorn's, apprised of her intention of coming here by herself."

"*Apprised* of her intention!" Fidelia started back, and after surveying him for a moment with an appalling frown of indignation, turned abruptly from him.

He hastily followed, and again seizing her hand, vowed he could not, would not let her pass till she forgave the expression that had involuntarily escaped him.

Seriously offended, Fidelia, without speaking, was trying to disengage her hand from him, when again a sigh, deeper than before, was heard.

"We are watched," cried Grandison, and dropping her hand, he again rushed

towards the place from which it seemed to come.

Fidelia took advantage of the circumstance to effect her escape, but had hardly got many paces, when she was again joined by Grandison—"I could not discover even a trace of any one," he said, "and am almost tempted to believe the building haunted: were I to remain longer here, I should endeavour to exorcise the spirit."

"Perhaps it would be better to try what you could do with one more immediately in your power," observed Fidelia, a little sarcastically.

"Ah! I understand you; but come, afford me a proof of yours being under your control, by letting me obtain the forgiveness I solicit."

"Oh well, there," permitting him to take the hand for which his was extended; "but remember, that to readily pardon is sometimes as much a proof of careless indifference about what has been said, as of real good-nature."

"Thank you," said Grandison, laughing; "you want to prevent my being too much elated by having succeeded in deprecating your resentment: but it won't do—I must be all joy at it." But the pleasure he evinced was of short duration.

They soon reached the spot where he meant to leave her, and uncertain when or whether they should meet again—whether he might not be compelled by honour and feeling to persevere in shunning her, he suffered a pang at the moment he could scarcely conceal.

Fidelia lingered behind him; she tried to persuade herself that the tender, the affectionate adieu she had received was not a final one; yet almost was she tempted to relinquish this idea, from the almost solemn manner in which it was given.

While musing on it—while recalling all he had ever said—all perhaps he had ever looked, she was surprised by lady Castle Dermot. That Grandison would

probably seek a parting interview, suddenly occurred to her, and instantly decided her on going out in quest of Fidelia.

The moment she saw her, she strictly questioned her, not only whether she had seen Grandison, but on her acknowledging she had, what he had said to her.

This Fidelia could not bring herself exactly to detail; she succeeded, however, in dispelling the alarm that had seized her ladyship, of some dangerous explanation having taken place between them in this last interview; and she determined it should not be her fault if they had a similar opportunity again for disappointing the hope she was indulging.

But why did not lord Castle Dermot come? It was soon evident that Grandison had not attended to her request, and she now wondered that she could have ever supposed he would; that, admiring Fidelia as he did himself, he would be the means of exposing her to the admiration of another. At length

she addressed a letter to her careless son, couched in a manner so artful as to excite, as intended, a degree of curiosity that induced him to decide on paying her a flying visit.

In the meantime Fidelia was every day treated with a greater degree of indulgence and affection. Now that Grandison was gone, no restraint was attempted to be imposed on her actions. But the freedom allowed her she did not misuse: sad and pensive as often were her feelings, she allowed them no romantic indulgence; by constant employment, by cultivating, as far as in her power, the talents she was mistress of, she strove at once to banish dejecting reflections, and merit her own approbation.

From the delightfulness of the season, her favourite occupation was sketching the adjacent scenery: she loved to catch the varying tints of aerial hue—the purple haze—the crimson glow of evening—the dark wood—the shrouded village—the

ivied spire—the woodman, with his ragged dog, marking his mazy path by trailing smoke—the pretty cottager, peeping through the honeysuckle screen of her little casement—the beggar, old but blithe—and the playful children, bursting from the confinement of the village school.

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